INSPIRED WRITINGS OF HINDUISM

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by

THEODORE GOLDSTUCKER



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The long article on *The Veda* published in this volume first appeared in Knight's *Encyclopædia Metropolitana,* s. v. 1860, and the other two essays: *Vedic Literature* and *The Evolution of Indian Thought* were contributed by Goldstucker to Chambers' Encyclopædia, vols. iv to x, 1862-1868. A scholarly and penetrating review by Goldstucker of six important works relating to Indian religion and philosophy, published during the years 1859-1863, appeared in an English journal under the title *The Inspired Writings of Hinduism,* and the best portion of the article is reproduced in this volume. The bio-bibliographical sketch is a brief summary of an anonymous memoir of his life written by one of his oldest and most valued friends.

THEODORE GOLDSTUCKER

Theodore Goldstucker was born of Jewish parents on January 18, 1821, *at Konigsberg, in Prussia; he matriculated in* 1836 *from the University of Konigsberg; attended the lectures of Lobeck on classical philology, of Schubert on history, of Rosenkranz on philosophy, and of P. von Bohlen on Sanskrit; became a student at Bonn in* 1838 *and studied Arabic under Freytag, general and Indian literature under A. W. von Schlegel, continuing at the same time the study of Sanskrit under Lassen; in* 1840 *took his doctor's degree at the age of nineteen; moved to Paris in* 1842 *and stayed there for three years, where he became a close friend of Eugene Burnouf; returned from Paris in* 1845 *and settled in Konigsberg till* 1847 *when he removed to Berlin; left Germany in* 1850 *for political reasons and accepted an offer of H. H. Wilson to prepare for the press a new edition of his Sanskrit dictionary; appointed to the honorary post of Professor of Sanskrit, University College, London,* 1852; *held this post for the rest of his life; highly respected as an authority on Sanskrit philology, and on ancient Hindu literature and law—appreciated by Alexander von Humboldt, who expressed his obligation to his learning in the most flattering terms; Burnouf consulted him on Sanskrit technicalities; Max Muller acclaimed him as one of the greatest Sanskritists; and he was considered the highest authority on the Hindu Law of Inheritance and frequently consulted by the Government of India; no other Europeans, except perhaps Max Muller and Deussen, appeared to understand Indian Civilization and culture so well; he died on the* 6th *of March,* 1872. *The first fruit of his Sanskrit studies is a translation of a mediaeval philosophical drama, Probodha-Chandrodaya. This translation was printed in* 1842 *at Konigsberg by his professor of Sanskrit, Rosenkranz, under the express condition that Goldstucker's name should not be mentioned; then Goldstucker prepared a new and critical edition of the Mahabharata; he devoted the best part of his time and energies to Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit grammar in all their minute details and intricacies, as well as to Vedic literature, and was never tired of copying and collating manuscripts of texts and commentaries. The aim, traceable in all his works, at combining the greatest possible accuracy with the highest attainable completeness, is most conspicuous in his unfinished Sanskrit-English*

Dictionary, London, 1856-64, *which in its progressive stages assumed such dimensions that it had to be stopped even before it had reached the end of the first letter of the alphabet. But in its four hundred and eighty pages so many valuable monographs are contained, that it will ever remain an indispensable book of reference on the special subjects of which they treat. The more materials Goldstucker accumulated, sifted, and arranged for use in the various publications he had projected, the more fastidious he became in going to print, more specially as he worked with no view to literary fame, or to any other selfish advancement. Thus it is that what he published amounts to considerably less than what most other scholars with his brilliant intellect, his indefatigable industry, his vast erudition, and his splendid opportunities, would have accomplished. Goldstucker issued in* 1865 *the first fascicule of a critical edition of the celebrated compendium of the Mimansa philosophy, the Jaiminiya-nyaya-mala-vistara, by Madhavacharya, the great commentator on the Vedas. He had for twenty-five years collected materials for this edition and for the introduction to it, which was intended to have been published with the last fascicules; but the edition remained unfinished at the time of his death, and later has been completed by Cowell. For a yet longer period, Goldstucker had been engaged in the study of Panini, the old Sanskrit Grammarian, and of Patanjali's great commentary upon Panini's Sutras. The result was the critical work Panini: his Place in Sanskrit Literature prefixed to his fac-simile edition of the Manava-Kalpa-sutra, London*, 1861.

No other Sanskrit scholar was so much at home in these abstruse grammatical works, and in the literature bearing upon them, as Goldstucker. He was constantly adding to his materials for a comprehensive work on them, and it was only as part of his general scheme that he obtained the sanction of the India Council to the publication, under his superintendence, of a photolithographed reproduction of several good manuscripts which had been brought to his notice, containing Patanjali's Mahabhashya, as well as Kaiyyata's gloss and Bhattojidikshita's commentary on the latter. It took him several years of patient labour to carry those six ponderous quartos through the press; and he had finished all but two hundred pages when death carried him off. This was published in 1874 *by the Government of India after his death. It is a magnificient publication, and as only fifty copies were printed it has become more valuable even than a rare manuscript. Goldstucker wrote many articles for various encyclopaedias on Indian Philosophy and mythology,*

which were collected together and published after his death as Literary Remains in 1879. *He founded the Society for the Publication of Sanskrit Texts in London,* 1866; *was a Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, and of its Council; President of the Phililogical Society, before which and the Asiatic Society he read various papers, but would not publish them. His last work was On the Deficiencies in the Present Administration of Hindu Law.*

THE VEDA

THE word VEDA (from the Sanskrit radical VID, 'to know' —kindred with the Latin VID-, Greek ιδ, Gothic VAIT) literally means 'knowing', or 'knowledge'; but is emphatically used as the name of those ancient Sanskrit works which constitute the basis of Brahmanic belief, and are held by the Hindus to have been revealed to them by their deities. These works were originally three, namely, the RIGVEDA, the YAJURVEDA, and the SAMAVEDA. At a more recent period a fourth Veda was added to them, but it never obtained that degree of sancity which was allowed to its predecessors; it is not mentioned, for instance, in the ninth verse of the Purusha-sukta of the Rigveda, which speaks of the Rig-, Sama-, and Yajur-veda; nor in the Chhandogya-Upanishad; nor even in the law-book of Manu; for though the latter refers on several occasions to the three Vedas, it speaks only once[1] of "the revelations of the Atharvangirasas," by this expression alluding to, but not naming by name, the Atharvaveda; and even the writers on the Mimansa, a doctrine that has for its object to clear up doubtful passages and to reconcile discrepancies of Vaidik texts, are merely concerned in those of the three former Vedas, not in those of the Atharvaveda.

Each of these four Vedas consists of two distinct parts: a SANHITA or collection of MANTRAS, and a portion called BRAHMANA.

MANTRAS (from MAN, 'to think,' literally 'that by which thinking is effected') means a hymn or prayer. According to the definition given by Madhava-Sayana, the celebrated commentator of the Vedas—in his work on the Mimansa,[2] and in his introductions to the RIGVEDA and Aitareya-brahmana,—a MANTRA is sometimes addressed to

[1] xi. 33.

[2] Jaiminiya-nyaya-mala-vistara.

the divinity with a verb in the first person; sometimes it ends with the verb 'thou art,' or with the word 'thee': now it mentions the performance of ritual acts, then it contains praises, invocations, injunctions, reflections, complaints, puts questions or returns answers, &c.[3] The author of a MANTRA, as we should say—or as the Hindu authorities state, the saint "by whom it was first spoken," the "seer" or "rememberer" of its text—in short the personage to whom the MANTRA is supposed to have been revealed, is called its RISHI. The deity to whom "the RISHI seeking for the accomplishment of his objects, addresses his praise," is its DEVATA[4]. But since there are MANTRAS which contain neither petition nor adoration, the subject of such MANTRAS is considered as the deity that is spoken of; for example, the praise of generosity is the DEVATA of many entire hymns addressed to princes from whom gifts were received by the author.[5]

A BRAHMANA (neuter—not to be confounded with the masculine word, or the name of the sacerdotal caste)—from BRAHMAN,[6] prayer, is twofold; according to Madhava, it contains "either commandments or explanations;" in other words, it gives directions for the performance of sacrificial acts, and explains the origin and object of the rite, by giving citations of hymns, illustrations and legendary narratives, also by speculations of a mystical and philosophical kind. The BRAHMANA portion of the Vedas is therefore the foundation of the Vaidik ritual, which became fully developed and systematised in the ritual works called the KALPA-SUTRAS; and it is also the source whence sprang those mystical and theosophical writings,

[3] Colebrooke, 'Misc. Ess.' i p, 308; Muller, 'Ancient Sanskrit Literature,' p. 343; Goldstucker, 'Introduction to the Manava Kalpa Sutra, or Panini,' p. 99.

[4] Yaska's 'Nirukta,' vii. 1.

[5] Colebr., 'Misc. Ess.' i. p. 22.

[6] Muir, 'Original Sanskrit Texts,' i^2., p. 240-65; Haug. 'Brahma und die Brahmanen,' (1871), p. 5 ff.

the ARANYAKAS and UPANISHADS, which at a later period expanded into the orthodox VEDANTA philosophy, and which are frequently referred to even by the other philosophical schools, though their orthodoxy is extremly doubtful and widely different from that of the Vedanta doctrine.

That there was originally but one text of each of the four Vedas is plausible enough. Tradition records that the son of Parasara Rishi, Krishna Dwaipayana, surnamed Vyasa, "having compiled and arranged the scriptures, theogonies and mythological poems, taught the several Vedas to as many disciples, namely the Rigveda to Paila, the Yajurveda to Vaisampayana, the Samaveda to Jaimini, and the Atharvaveda to Sumantu."[7] But inasmuch as these saints taught the lessons they had learned to their pupils, who in their turn communicated their knowledge to their disciples, and so forth, it is obvious that great variations must have crept into the text; and we know as a fact, that gradually many schools or CHARANAS arose, each giving preference to its own readings, and, as particularly in the case of the Yajurveda, to its own arrangement and distribution of the sacred text. Hence it came to pass, that each of these Vedas branched off into various SAKHAS (branches), or as we might say, into various editions, which though in the main concurring in their contents, nevertheless contained verbal differences enough to account for the divisions of their respective schools. A work which treats of these schools[8] enumerates several of them by name, and states that five, sixty-eight, a thousand, and nine were the respective numbers of the Charanas of the RIG-, YAJUR-, SAMA-, and ATHARVA-VEDA. Very few only of these editions have come down to us, and the loss of the greatest part of them is the more to be deplored, as they would probably have enabled us to account for some (and

[7] Colebr., 'Misc. Ess.' i. p. 14.; Wilson, Rigveda, I. p. xx.

[8] The *Charanavyuha.*

important) differences in the verses common to some or all of these Vedas, and perhaps also for superstitions of later times, which are said to be founded on, but are not countenanced by, the text, as we possess it now, of the Rigveda Sanhita.

If in order to gain an insight into the peculiar character of each of these Vedas, we consult the view entertained of it by the Indian writers, little aid will be afforded us by the mythological narrative of the Satapatha-brahmana[9] and Manu's 'Law-book,'[10], which tell us, in the same words, that (Brahma), "for the due performance of the sacrifice, drew out the threefold eternal Veda, the Rigveda from fire, the Yajurveda from air, and the Samaveda from the sun;" nor will our knowledge be more advanced by a passage from the Bhagavata[11] and the Vishnu-Purana, which inform us[12] that "Brahma created the Rigveda... from his eastern mouth, the Yajurveda...from his southern, the Samaveda...from his western, and the Atharvaveda... from his northern mouth." But of greater importance is evidently a statement of the Kaushitaki-brahmana which while omitting to mention the Atharvaveda, calls the Yajur- and Sama-veda "the attendants of the Rigveda".[13] The real bearing of the latter words however, becomes clear from what Sayana says in his introduction to the Rigveda. After having inferred from the ninth verse of the Purushasukta, mentioned before[14] the precedence in rank of the Rigveda before the other Vedas, he continues: "the Taittiriyas, or followers of the Black Yajurveda record that whatever sacrificial act is performed by means of the Sama- and Yajur-veda is (comparatively) slender,

[9] xi. 5, 8, 1.

[10] i. 23.

[11] iii. 12-37.

[12] i. cap. 5.

[13] Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.', p. 457.

[14] 2 ed., p. 7 ff. Comp. Muir's 'Original Sanskrit Texts,' i. p. 6.

whatever is done by means of the Rigveda is strong;" and ..."among the hymns found in the Yajurveda there are many Rigveda hymns, which are to be employed by the Adhwaryu priest: all the hymns of the Samaveda come from the Rigveda and even those who make use of the Atharvaveda read in their own Sanhita, to a considerable extent, the very hymns of the Rigveda."[15] It results from this statement, not only that the Rigveda was held to be prior in rank to the other Vedas, but that it was considered to be older than they, and that the hymns of the Samaveda were entirely, and those of the two other Vedas to a considerable degree, extracted from the Rigveda-Sahmita. And this information of the celebrated commentator is fully borne out by a comparison of the hymns of the four Vedas. For, though Benfey has shown, in his edition of the Samaveda,[16] that seventy-one verses of the latter are not met with in the present text of the Rigveda, and that many readings of this Veda differ from those of the Samaveda, it does not follow "that the recension of the Rigveda-Sanhita took place at a later period than that of the Samaveda," nor "that the Rigveda verses occurring in the Samaveda are older than those of the present Rigveda text;[17] but, as Muller justly observes,[18] that this difference "may possibly be accounted for by the fact, that we do not possess all the Sakhas of the Rigveda."

The true nature, however, of this relation betwten the Rigveda and the other Vedas, appears from the purposes which they were made to serve, purposes, which, according to the concurrent statement of all Indian authors, are of a ritual or sacrificial character.

A Vaidik sacrifice is a piece of machinery of a very complicated kind. A knowledge of it is imparted to a class of writings, the Kalpa works, which will be treated

[15] Sayana, in Muller's ed. of the 'Rigveda,' i. p. 2.
[16] P. xix.
[17] Weber, in his 'Akademische Vorlesungen,' p. 9, 62.
[18] Anc. Sansk. Lit.' p. 475.

of hereafter. Good care was taken by their authors, or the authorities whence their contents are derived, that no man who intended to perform a regular sacrifice,[19] could satisfy his religious want—which was always connected with some worldly desire, such as the birth of a son, increase of cattle, attainment of military renown, conquest, and the like—without the assistance of one or more priests, who as a matter of course always belonged to the Brahmana caste. There were sacrifices which lasted one day, others which went on from two to eleven days, others which took up as many as a hundred days. Accordingly, to perform some sacrifices one RITWIJ, or priest, sufficed; or, to complete others, four, five, or six priests were necessary; their fullest complement, however, is the number of sixteen, for a seventeenth Ritwij—the SADASYA, or superintendent—is not admitted by all authorities; and the assistants of the priests—the slayer, the butcher, the ladle-holder, the choristers, &c.—are not counted amongst the Ritwijs or real priests.

This full contingent of priests is enumerated by Aswalayana[20] in the following way. First comes the HOTRI, who has under him three men (PURUSHA), the Maitravaruna, Achchhavaka, and Gravastut; secondly, the ADHWARYU, with the Pratiprasthatri, Neshtri, and Unnetri; thirdly, the BRAHMAN, with the Brahmanachchhansin, Agnidhra (or Agnidh), and Potri; lastly, the UDGATRI, with the Prastotri, Pratihartri, and Subrahmanya.[21] The same class arrangement, though sometimes in a different order, occurs likewise in other authorities.[22]

[19] A *yajamana*.

[20] Srauta Sutra, iv. 1.

[21] Comp. Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.,' Pp. 468, 469, where, by a mistake, some of the *purushas* of the *Brahman* and the *Udgatri* have changed their places.

[22] For example, Katyayana Sr. S. vii., 1, 6; Madhava's Jaiminiyayay., iii. 7, 17; see also the note to

Now, of these Ritwijs, the Kalpa works enjoin that the Adhwaryu has to perform his duties with the Jajurveda, the Udgatri with the Samaveda, the Hotri with the Rigveda, and that the Brahman "has to set right any deficiency that may have occurred in the religious acts of the three former priests; he must, therefore, be acquainted with all the three Vedas—the Rig-, Yajur-, and Samaveda."[23] It may be added, moreover, that the Adhwaryu had to mutter, inaudibly, the verses of the Yajurveda, that the Udgatri had to chant those of the Samaveda,[24] and that the Hotri had to recite in a loud voice the verses of the Rigveda.

It follows, therefore, that each of these Vedas had its distinct ceremonial; but that no ceremonial was assigned to, and that no distinct priest or class of priests had to use, the hymns of the Atharvaveda. "The Atharvaveda," says Madhusudana, "is not used for the sacrifice; it only teaches how to appease, to bless, to curse, &c." "Its songs," as Muller observes[25] "formed probably, an additional part of the sacrifice from a very early time. They were chiefly intended to counteract the influence of any untoward event that might happen during the sacrifice. They also contained imprecations and blessings, and various formulas, such as popular superstition would be sure to sanction at all times and in all countries." And the same scholar infers that it was probably part of the office of the Brahman priest, also, to know and to apply these songs, whenever their effect was supposed to be required for remedying any mistake committed by the other

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p. 209, in Wilson's second volume of his translation of the Rigveda.

[23] 'Madhava's Jaiminiyanyay,' iii. 7, 17; vi. 3, 14; Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.,' p. 469. ff.

[24] Probably in the same manner as the Pentateuch is intoned up to this day by the officiating Jews in their synagogues.

[25] 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.' p. 447.

three classes of priests. At all events, it is certain that the Atharvaveda is not comprised among the sacrificial Vedas, and that its later date may be safely concluded from its not being mentioned in those works which regulate the ancient rites, even if such posteriority were not recognisable from the language of those of its hymns which do not occur in the other Vedas.

By comparing, however, the contents of the three sacrificial Vedas with the ritual precepts of the Kalpa works, we may ascertain another important fact. All the verses of the Yajurveda and all the verses of the Samaveda are used in one sacrificial act or another. Such, however, is not the case with the verses of the Rigveda. Many of the latter, indeed, are likewise indispensable for sacrificial purposes, as we are taught by the ritual books connected with this Veda; yet a good number remain, which stand quite aloof from any ceremony. This class bears purely a poetical or mystical character; and it may be fairly inferred that even the strong tendency of later ages to impress an entirely sacrificial stamp on each of these Vedas, broke down before the natural and poetical power that had evidently called forth these songs, as it could not incorporate them amongst the liturgic hymns. We may quote, for instance, a hymn from the tenth Mandala of the Rigveda,[26] as an illustration of those which belong to the mystical poetry of this Veda. It runs thus, "Then there was no entity nor nonentity; no world, nor sky, nor aught above it; nothing anywhere in the happiness of any one, involving or involved; nor water deep and dangerous. Death was not; nor then was immortality; nor distinction of day or night. But THAT breathed without afflation, single with (SWADHA) her who is within him. Other than him, nothing existed (which) since (has been). Darkness there was; (for) this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was undistinguishable (like fluids mixed in) waters; but that mass, which was covered by the husk, was (at

[26] From Colebrooke's 'Misc. Ess.,' i. p. 33.

length) produced by the power of contemplation. First, desire was formed in his mind, and that became the original productive seed; which the wise, recognising it by the intellect in their hearts, distinguish, in non-entity, as the bond of entity. Did the luminous ray of these (creative acts) expand in the middle? or above? or below? That productive seed at once became providence (or sentient souls) and matter (or the elements): she, who is sustained within himself, was inferior; and he, who heeds, was superior. Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare, whence and why this creation took place? The gods are subsequent to the production of this world; then who can know whence it proceeded? or whence this varied world arose? or whether it uphold itself or not? He who in the highest heaven is the ruler of this universe, does indeed know; but not another can possess this knowledge.''

An instance of another kind of Rigveda hymns, which cannot have served any sacrificial purpose, is given by Max Muller in his excellent work on 'Ancient Sanskrit Literature'.[27] It bears a satirical character, inasmuch as it ridicules the elaborate ceremonial of the Brahmans, and is rendered by him thus: ''After lying prostrate for a year, like Brahmans performing a vow, the frogs have emitted their voice, roused by the showers of heaven. When the heavenly waters fell upon them, as upon a dry fish lying in a pond, the music of the frogs comes together like the lowing of cows with their calves. When at the approach of the rainy season, the rain has wetted them as they were longing and thirsting, one goes to the other while he talks, like a son to his father, saying, 'akkhala!' One of them embraces the other, when they revel in the shower of water; and the brown frog jumping after he has been ducked, joins his speech with the green one. As one of them repeats the speech of the other, like a pupil and his

[27] Muir, Anc. Sanskrit Texts, v. 435 ff. Haug, 'Brahma und die Brahmanen,' p. 40 ff.

teacher, every limb of them is, as it were, in growth, when they converse eloquently on the surface of the water. One of them is Cow-noise, the other Goat-noise; one is Brown, the other Green; they are different though they bear the same name, and modulate their voices in many ways as they speak. Like Brahmans at the Soma sacrifice of Atiratra, sitting round a full pond, and talking, you, O frogs, celebrate this day of the year when the rainy season begins. These Brahmans with their Soma have had their say, performing the annual rite. These Adhwaryus, sweating whilst they carry the hot pots, pop out like hermits. They have always observed the order of the gods as they are to be worshipped in the twelvemonth; these men do not neglect their season; the frogs who had been like hot pots themselves, are now released when the rainy season of the year sets in. Cow-noise gave, Goat-noise gave, the Brown gave, and the Green gave us treasures. The frogs, who give us hundreds of cows, lengthen our life in the rich autumn." In another hymn of the last Mandala a gambler laments over his evil passion, which beguiles him into sin. All these and similar hymns are evidently of quite a different character than those which praise the power of the elementary gods, and could find their place in sacrificial acts.

But there is further evidence to show that the collection of the Rigveda cannot have borne originally a ritual stamp. When songs are intended only for liturgic purposes, they are sure to be arranged in conformity with the ritual acts to which they apply; when, on the contrary, they flow from the poetical or pious longings of the soul, they may, in the course of time, be used at, and adapted for, religious rites, but they will never submit to that systematic arrangement which is inseparable from the class of liturgic songs. Now, such a systematic arrangement characterises the collection of the Yajurveda and Samaveda hymns; it is foreign to the Rigveda-Sanhita.

With the exception of the last book, which is of a mystical nature, all the other books of the whole Yajur-

veda contain verses which are classified according to the special sacrifices at the performing of which they were muttered. The Sanhita of the Samaveda consists of verses which had to be intoned especially at the moon-plant sacrifice. The arrangement of the Rigveda hymns, however, is quite of a different kind. It resisted the order of a finished ceremonial. The Rigveda hymns are not distributed with reference to sacrificial acts; they are partly arranged according to the divinities to whom they are addressed, and partly according to their authors, the Rishis, who made them known. They must therefore have preceded the completion of that ceremonial, which is the indispensable condition of the Samaveda- and Yajurveda-Sanhitas.

Having established the general character of the four Vedas, we shall now give a brief outline of their special features and of the principal works which owe them their origin.

The Rig-, or the first and principal, Veda, we possess only in the recension of the Sakhala school. Its Sanhita or collection of hymns, is aranged on two methods. The one has merely regard to the material bulk; the other seems to be based on the authorship of the Mantras. Both, however, run parallel with one another, without differing in the order of the hymns which constitute the Sanhita. According to the first method, the Sanhita is divided into eight ASHTAKAS or eights, each of which is again subdivided into ADHYAYAS or lectures, an Adhyaya consisting of a number of VARGAS or sections, and a Varga of a number of RICK or verses, usually five. According to the second method, the Sanhita is divided into ten MANDALAS or circles, subdivided into eighty-five Anuvachas or lessons, which consist of one thousand and seventeen (or, with eleven additional hymns, of one thousand and twenty-eight) SUKTAS or hymns, these again containing ten thousand five hundred and eighty and a half RICK or verses. The first eight of these Mandalas begin with hymns addressed to Agni, which are followed by hymns

addressed to INDRA. After the latter come generally hymns addressed to the VISWE DEVAS, or the gods collectively, and then those which are devoted to other divinities. The ninth Mandala is entirely addressed to the Soma-plant, and is especially connected, therefore, with the Samaveda-Sanhita; while the tenth Mandala has chiefly served for the collection of the Atharvaveda hymns. Again, as regards their author, the second Mandala contains hymns which are attributed to the Rishi Gritsamada; the third is said to belong to Viswamitra, the fourth to Vamadeva, the fifth to the Atris, the sixth to Bharadwaja, the seventh to Vasishtha, the eighth to Kanwa, the ninth to Angiras. The first and the tenth Mandala are ascribed to the authorship of various Rishis.

"The worship which the Suktas describe comprehends offering prayer and praise: the former are chiefly oblations and libations,—clarified butter poured on fire; and the expressed and fermented juice of the Soma-plant, presented in ladles to the deities invoked,—in what manner does not exactly appear, although it seems to have been sprinkled, sometimes on the fire, sometimes on the ground, or, rather, on the KUSA, or sacred grass, strewed on the floor, and in all cases the residue was drunk by the assistants. The ceremony takes place in the dwelling of the worshipper, in a chamber appropriated to the purpose, and probably to the maintenance of a perpetual fire, although the frequent allusions to the occasional kindling of the sacred flame are rather at variance with this practice. There is no mention of any temple, nor any reference to a public place of worship, and it is clear that the worship was entirely domestic.... That animal victims were offered on particular occasions may be inferred from brief and obscure allusions in the hymns of the first book; and it is inferrible from some passages that human sacrifices were not unknown, although infrequent and sometimes typical; but those are the exceptions, and the habitual offerings may be regarded as consisting of clarified butter and the juice of the Soma-plant.

"The SUKTA almost invariably combines the attributes of prayer and praise: the power, the vastness, the generosity, the goodness, and even the personal beauty of the deity addressed are described in highly laudatory strains, and his past bounties or exploits rehearsed and glorified; in requital of which commendations, and of the libations or oblations which he is solicited to accept, and in approval of the rite in his honour, at which his presence is invoked, he is implored to bestow blessings on the person who has instituted the ceremony, and sometimes, but not so commonly, also on the author or reciter of the prayer. The blessings prayed for are, for the most part, of a temporal and personal description,—wealth, food, life, posterity, cattle, cows, and horses; protection against enemies, victory over them, and sometimes their destruction, particularly when they are represented as inimical to the celebration of religious rites, or, in other words, people not professing the same religious faith. There are a few indications of a hope of immortality and of future happiness, but they are neither frequent nor, in general, distinctly announced, although the immortality of the gods is recognised, and the possibility of its attainment by human beings exemplified in the case of the demigods termed R'ibhus, elevated for their piety to the rank of divinities. Protection against evil spirits (RAKSHASAS) is also requested, and in one or two passages YAMA and his office, as ruler of the dead, are obscurely alluded to. There is little demand for moral benefactions, although in some few instances hatred of untruth and abhorrence of sin are expressed; a hope is uttered that the latter may be repented of or expiated; and the gods are in one hymn solicited to extricate the worshippers from sin of every kind. The main object of the prayers, however, are benefits of a more worldly and physical character: the tone in which these are requested indicates a quiet confidence in their being granted, as a return for the benefits which the gods are supposed to derive from the offerings made to them, in gratifying their bodily wants, and from the

praises which impart to them enhanced energy and augmented power: there is nothing, however, which denotes any particular potency in the prayer or hymn, so as to compel the gods to comply with the desires of the worshipper; nothing of that enforced necessity which makes so conspicuous and characteristic a figure in the Hindu mythology of a later date, by which the performance of austerities for a continued period constrains the gods to grant the desired boon, although fraught with peril and even destruction to themselves."[28]

If we ask what divinities were worshipped by the authors of the Rigveda hymns, an answer is given by Yaska, the oldest Vaidik exegete of those whose writings are preserved, in the following manner: "The Vaidik exegete says that there are *three* Devatas, viz., Agni, who resides on earth; Vayu, or Indra, who resides in the intermediate region (between heaven and earth); and Surya, who resides in heaven. Because each of these Devatas has a variety of attributes, there are indeed many names of them";[29] and "of the Devata there is but one soul; but the Devata having a variety of attributes, it is praised in many ways; other gods are merely portions of the one soul."[30] The Anukramani, or explanatory index to this Veda, says, in a similar manner, "The deities are only three, whose places are the earth, the intermediate region, and heaven: (namely) fire, air, and the sun. They are pronounced to be (the deities of the mysterious names severally); and (Prajapati) the lord of creation is (the deity) of them collectively. The syllable OM intends every deity: it belongs to (Parameshthi) him who dwells in the supreme abode; it appertains to (Brahman) the vast one; to (Deva) God; to (Adhyatman) the superintending soul. Other deities belonging to those several regions are portions of the three gods; for they are variously

[28] Wilson, 'Rigveda,' vol. i. p. xxiii. ff.
[29] vii. 5.
[30] vii. 4.

named and described, on account of their various operations; but (in fact) there is only one deity, the GREAT SOUL (Mahan atma). He is called the Sun; for he is the soul of all beings: (and) that is declared by the sage: 'the sun is the soul of (jagat) what moves and of (tasthivat) that which is fixed.' Other deities are portions of him.'[31]

If we took this account for a correct representation of the Vaidik creed we could not but draw the inference that it was based on the belief in one god, or, at least, one principle of creation, and that the many gods met with in the Vaidik hymns are merely poetical allegories of the One Great Soul. We have quoted indeed, before, a mystical hymn of the Rigveda, which would seem to countenance this view. But an unbiassed examination of the Rigveda poetry must lead to the conclusion that religion did not take this course in India; that we must distinguish between one or more hymns, evidently the product of a later and philosophical age, and the bulk of that collection which contains nothing but the adoration of the elementary powers in their various manifestations and degrees. Nor can we give an unqualified assent to the threefold classification of the Vaidik divinities, as given by Yaska, and repeated by the Anukramani; for neither is Agni's abode restricted to earth, nor could Indra be identified or placed on the same level with Vayu, nor would it be correct to assign to Surya such a place in the Vaidik pantheon as would equalise his rank with that of Agni or Indra. The real position and quality of the PRINCIPAL Vaidik divinities of the Rigveda is, in short, this: The chief deities are AGNI and INDRA, the two gods, as we have noticed before, to whom the first series of hymns is addressed in eight out of the ten Mandalas of the Sanhita. AGNI[32] (from AJ, "to move," Latin, (IGNI-) is the God of Fire, under a threefold aspect of this element: as it exists on earth, in its daily use and in its

[31] Colebrooke, 'Misc. Ess.,' i. p. 27.
[32] Muir, l. l., v. 199 ff.

sacrificial capacity, as well as the heat of digestion and the principle of animal and vegetable life; secondly, as the fire of lightning; and thirdly, as the fire of the sun. Agni is praised therefore as the originator of the sacrifice, and as the mediator between gods and men: he conveys offerings to the former, and brings the gods to the worshipper. During the night he protects mortals from the demons who haunt the altars and are hostile to religious rites. On the other hand, as the fire of lightning, Agni is the "son, or the grandson, of the waters;" and as the fire of the sun he grants wealth, food, health, and life, destroys and revives all things. Not many subordinate divinities are mentioned in his train; sometimes, the MARUTS, or Winds, are, but they are more frequently the attendants of Indra; and the APRIS, female divinities which also include insensible objects, such as the doors of the sacrificial hall. The proper offering to Agni is GHEE (ghrita), or clarified butter.

INDRA[33] (a word of doubtful etymology, probably from an obsolete radical ID or IND, "to see" or "to know") is the powerful god of the firmament. He bestows blessings and riches when propitiated by the juice of the Soma-plant, which is his appropriate offering. He has elevated the sun and fixed the constellations in the sky; but above all he is the conqueror of VRITRA ("the enveloper"), the demon who hides the sun, and of the clouds which threaten to withhold their waters from the earth; he pierces them with his thunderbolt and the waters are let down. He is also represented as discovering, and rescuing with his thunderbolt, the cows which had been stolen and were hidden in the hollows of the mountains by a demon named Pani or Vala. It is possible that these cows, as Whitney believes[34] are meant for an allegory of the reservoirs of water which are freed by Indra, like the waters in the myth of Vritra; but it is

[33] Muir, l.l., v. 77 ff.
[34] 'Journal Amer. Or. Soc.' iii. p. 320.

possible also that this legend is merely a poetical record of an occurrence of pastoral life, such as we frequently meet with in the Rigveda poetry. A subordinate class of gods who are naturally associated with Indra, are the MARUTS,[35] or Winds; they assist Indra in his battles with Vritra and the production of rain. "They ride on spotted stags, wear shining armour, and carry spears in their hands; no one knows whence they come nor whither they go, their voice is heard aloud as they come rushing on; the earth trembles and the mountains shake before them. They are called the sons of RUDRA, who is conceived of as peculiar god of the tempest."[36] Besides them a god of wind, VAYU, is named: "he drives a thousand steeds; his breath chases away the demons; he comes in the earliest morning, as the first breath of air that stirs itself at day break, to drink the Soma, and the Auroras weave for him shining garments." This god is sometimes identified with Indra; but there are verses in which both, Indra and Vayu, are invoked conjointly to share in the sacrifice.

Amongst the gods assigned by Yaska to the sphere of heaven, we have to notice in the first rank the ADITYAS, or the sons of the ADITI.[37] The latter word means "indestructibility," and the Adityas are described as "elevated above all imperfection; they do not sleep or wink; their character is all truth; they hate and punish guilt; to preserve mortals from sin is their highest office." One of these Adityas, is SURYA, the sun, who is described as driving a chariot drawn by seven golden steeds, and is also personified as the ornamented bird of heaven. But he does not occupy that prominent rank among Vaidik gods which we might expect, and which seems to be

[35] Ib., v. 147 ff.

[36] Ib. p. 315.

[37] Muir, l. l., v. 54. Hillebrand, 'Uber die Gottin Aditi.' Breslau, 1876. M. Muller, Translation of the Rigveda, i. p. 230 ff.

allowed to him by Yaska. It must be observed, too, that some other words which mean "sun" in classical Sanskrit, especially SAVITRI, PUSHAN, and ARYAMAN are likewise Adityas in Vaidik mythology; and that VISHNU also is an Aditya when he is identified with the sun in its three stages of rise, culmination, and setting.[38] Of other Adityas, hoveover, we point out VARUNA (from VRI "to surround" — Greek *ourano*). He is the "all-embracing heaven, the orderer and ruler of the universe; he established the eternal laws which govern the movements of the world, and which neither immortal nor mortal may break; he regulated the seasons; appointed sun, moon, and stars, their courses; gave to each creature that which is peculiarly characteristic. . . . From his station in heaven Varuna sees and hears everything, nothing can remain hidden from him." He is said to be the divinity presiding over the night, to support the light on high, and to make wide the path of the sun: he grants wealth, averts evil, and protects cattle. He is frequently invoked, together with MITRA, another Aditya, who is the divinity presiding over the day, and a dispenser of water.[39]

The adoration of the sun is naturally connected with that of USHAS,[40] "dawn," or rather of USHASAS, "many dawns." "She is addressed as a virgin in glittering robes, who chases away the darkness, . . . who prepares a path for the sun, is the signal of the sacrifice, rouses all beings from slumber, gives sight to the darkened, power of motion to the prostrate and helpless."[41]

The last divinities which deserve our special attention are the two ASWINS.[42] They are the sons of the sea,

[38] 'Rigveda,' i. 22, 17.

[39] Wilson, 'Rigveda,' i. p. xxxiv.

[40] Muir, ib. p. 181 ff.

[41] Whitney, 'Journal Amer. Or. Soc.,' iii. p. 322.

[42] Muir, ib. p. 324 ff. L. Myriantheus, 'Die Acvins.' Munchen, 1876.

and are represented as ever young and handsome, travelling in a golden, three-wheeled, triangular chariot, drawn by an ass or two horses, and the precursors of the dawn. They are called DASRAS, "destroyers of fever or of diseases," for they are the physicians of the gods, and NASATYAS, "never untrue." Many legends are connected with their career: they brought back to a father his lost child, they restored the blind to sight; they relieved one man of his old body by giving him a new one instead; they supplied another with a metal leg to replace the one he had lost in battle; they assisted seafarers in their perils, and so on. They are probably the two luminous points which precede the dawn; some compare them with the Dioscuri of the Greek.

The constellations are never named as objects of worship and, although the moon appears to be occasionally intended under the name SOMA, particularly when spoken of as scattering darkness, yet the name and adoration are in a much less equivocal manner applied to the Soma-plant.[43]

The great gulf which lies between this elementary worship of the Rigveda and the later mythology need not be pointed out; but it will not be without interest to observe that we already meet in its poetry with some of those names which assume so different a character in the epic poems and the Puranas. Thus Rudra, the father of the Winds, becomes in the later mythology another name for Siva, who is unknown to the Vaidik hymns. Their Vishnu, a name of the Sun, and one of the Adityas, is the second person of the later Hindu triad; and his epithet Trivikrama, or "he who takes three steps," which means, as we have seen, the sun in its three stages, gives rise to the myth of the fourth Avatara of Vishnu, when, as a dwarf, he strides over the three worlds—earth, intermediate space, and heaven—and compels Bali, who

[43] Wilson, 'Rigveda,' i. p. xxvi.

threatened the sovereignty of Indra, to seek refuge in Tartarus.

From the nature of this worship, and from the desire for food, cattle, and the like, so frequently expressed in the hymns, it has sometimes been inferred that the condition of life as depicted in these hymns was that of a nomadic and pastoral people. There can be nothing more erroneous, if we look upon the actual collection of the hymns as a whole; as we did—and in the present state of Sanskrit philology are compelled to do—when drawing the previous sketch of the ancient Hindu belief. This collection, on the contrary, gives abundant proof that the Hindus of the Rigveda were settled in villages and towns, that they were a manufacturing people; for weaving, the melting of metallic substances, the fabrication of golden and iron mails, of ornaments, and the like, are not unfrequently alluded to. It is remarkable also, that they were a seafaring and a mercantile people. Even a naval expedition against a foreign island is mentioned in a hymn.[44] Tugra, a friend of the Aswins, we are told, "sent (his son) Bhujyu to sea, as a dying man parts with his riches; but you (Aswins) brought him back in vessels of your own, floating over the ocean, and keeping out the waters. Three nights and three days, Nasatyar, have you conveyed Bhujyu in three rapid revolving cars, having a hundred wheels, and drawn by six horses, along the watery bed of the ocean to the shore of the sea. This exploit you achieved, Aswins, in the ocean, where there is nothing to give support, nothing to rest upon, nothing to cling to, that you brought Bhujyu, sailing in a hundred-oared ship, to his father's house." We find them in possession of musical instruments, practising medicine, computing the division of time to a minute extent; and there is sufficient evidence in the hymns to show that they had not merely laws of buying and selling, but even such complicated laws of inheritance as we meet

[44] i. 116, 3. Muir, l. l. v. 244 ff.

with in the most advanced period of Hindu life. According to the latter, for instance, a son is the heir of the paternal property, to the exclusion of a daughter, as she transfers her property, by way of dower, to another family. But in default of a direct male heir, the son of a daughter may perform the funeral rites, or, what is equivalent, inherit the paternal property, provided that the daughter be *appointed* for such a purpose when given in marriage.[45] The same law is laid down in the following verses:[46] "The sonless father regulating (the contract) refers to his grandson (the son) of his daughter, and relying on the efficiency of the rite, honours his (son-in-law) with valuable gifts; the father, trusting to the impregnation of the daughter, supports himself with a tranquil mind. (A son) born of the body, does not transfer (paternal) wealth to a sister: he has made (her) the receptacle of the embryo of the husband; if the parents procreate children (of either sex), one is the performer of holy acts, the other is to be enriched (with gifts)."

That so advanced a state of social life could not remain without its evils and vices is obvious; we find hymns which describe gambling, which speak of robbers and thieves, of secret births, of youths associating with courtesans.

This sketch of the religious and social condition of ancient India rests, as mentioned, on the supposition of the Rigveda-Sanhita having always been that which it is now—in fact, on the Indian theory of the eternity of the Veda. In the beginning we quoted some passages from the 'Puranas' which show that these late productions of Hindu religion look upon all the Vedas as created by Brahma; but we also pointed out that the poets of the hymns are held even by the oldest authorities to be in-

[45] See Colebrooke's 'Digest,' 3, 161, and various authorities quoted in Goldstucker's 'Sanskrit Dictionary,' s.v. 'Aputrika.'

[46] Rigv. iii. 31. 1. 2. Wilson's translation.

spired seers, who received them from the deities. Muir, in one of the most interesting and elaborate works of Sanskrit philology,[47] has given other and very copious proof that the doctrine of the eternity of the Veda pervaded the poetry and the philosophical reasoning of ancient and mediæval India.[48] It may suffice therefore to add that even the differences which exist between the various editions of the sacred texts were explained away by an ingenious theory. It says that "the Vaidik texts got lost in the several Pralayas, or destructions of the worlds; and since each Manwantara had its own revelation, which differed only in the expression, not in the sense of the Vaidik texts, the various versions represent these successive revelations, which were remembered through their excessive accomplishments by the RISHIS."[49] In short, though according to this theory, a succession of revelations is admitted by the Hindu divines, they are conceived of as a reproduction of the first revelation, which comprised the whole bulk of the sacred text.

The utter improbability of an original contemporaneousness of all the hymns of the Rigveda is such that a theory founded on it would scarcely require a remark for the non-Brahmanic student of Hindu antiquity. In reading these hymns, such a student would not fail to perceive that some describe the most primitive features, and others—as we have shown—the most complicated mechanism of social life; that in some the first bud of religious life is perceptible, while others contain "the full-grown fruit of long experience in thought, or mark the end, or the beginning, of a phase of religious development." In other words, he would perceive the gradual and histori-

[47] Original Sanskrit Texts.

[48] We must content ourselves with referring for further detail to the third volume of this excellent record of the 'Original Texts.'

[49] Orig. Sansk. Texts, iii. p. 231, 232.

cal growth of that oldest document of the Brahmanic creed, the Rigveda-Sanhita. But even the Brahmanic student could not remain indifferent to the fact, that the hymns themselves destroy this theory of the eternity of the Veda, built up, as it was, in a priestly and systematising age. There are passages, for instance, in which the Rishis themselves describe themselves as composers or "fabricators" or "generators," not as "seers" of the hymns. "This hymn," we read in one, "has been *made* to the divine race by the sages." "Thus, O Indra," says another, "have the Gotamas *made* for thee pure hymns;" or "desiring wealth, men have *fashioned* (lit. fabricated) for thee this hymn, as a skilful workman (fabricates) a car;" or, "thus have the Gritsamadas, desiring succour, *fashioned* (lit. fabricated) for thee a hymn, as men make roads;" or, "the sages *generated* a pure hymn and a prayer to India;" "Wise Agni Batavedas, I *generate* a hymn for thee, who receivest it with favour;" and so on in numerous other instances.[50]

In other hymns, says Muir,[51] "the . . . passages from the Rigveda either expressly distinguish between contemporary Rishis and those of a more ancient date, or, at any rate, make reference to the one or the other class. This recognition of a succession of Rishis constitutes one of the *historical* elements in the Veda." If this succession were simply one of the poets, it might seem, from a Brahmanic point of view, to be not incompatible with the theory mentioned before; but it appears in conjunction with the narration of events, and thus excludes the possibility of their original coævity. "These gods," we read, for instance, "who formerly grew through reverence, were altogether blameless. They caused the dawn to rise, and the sun to shine for Vayu and the afflicted Manu;" or, "listen to Syavaswa pouring forth libations,

[50] Muir, 'Orig. Sansk. Texts,' iii. pp. 128-150.
[51] Ib. p. 117.

in the same way as thou didst listen to Atri when he celebrated sacred rites."[52]

Whichever view, therefore, one takes, it is clear that there are periods in the arrangement of those thousand and twenty-eight hymns which form the present Rigveda-Sanhita, and that the growth of the religious and social life of ancient India cannot be fully understood until we have a knowledge of the relative age at least of these hymns, since their real date may perhaps for ever remain as much beyond the control of philological research as it has remained hitherto. In some cases the description of events or the allusion to institutions of a domestic or public kind, in others the character of the religious notions expressed and the detail of the rites explained, may lead to a surmise as to the chronological relation of certain hymns; but since the soundness of a criterion of this kind will more or less depend on personal feelings or views, a safer footing is obtained in those hymns where the Rishi himself refers to a predecessor who is the poet of another hymn, or to events anterior to him, met with however in other portions of Rigveda poetry. For there it is possible at once to establish a relative order in time between such hymns. But as instances of this description are rare, the real burden of proof will probably always rest with the linguistic facts that may be gathered from the various hymns. They are the stubborn monuments which raise their heads above the confusion created by the systematising arrangement of later times. As yet, however, Sanskrit philology has done little or nothing to enable us to see clearly in the mist of the gradual development of the Vaidik age. It is struggling even at present to save the very meaning of the Vaidik words, as handed down to us by Indian scholarship, and the grammatical explanation of the Vaidik commentaries, from a conceit which strives to substitute its own fanciful notions

[52] Somp. Muir, Orig. Sansk. Texts, iii. pp. 116-128.

for the traditional lore—the only real means we possess for understanding these ancient texts.

If now we turn to the Sanhitas of the next two Vedas, our attention will be particularly engaged by the purpose for which they were collected, or, as observed before, for which they were either entirely, or for the most part, extracted from the Rigveda-Sanhita. This purpose, we stated, was a liturgic one. The verses of the Samaveda were intoned at those sacrificial acts which were performed with the juice of the Soma-plant. A short account of the manner in which the libations of this juice were prepared and offered to the gods is given in the introduction of Stevenson's translation of the Samaveda. "The first thing to be done is to collect the Soma, or moon-plant, and the arani-wood for kindling the sacred fire; and this must be done in a moonlight night, and from the table-land on the top of a mountain. The moon-plants must be plucked up from the roots, not cut down; and after being stripped of their leaves, the bare stems are to be laid on a car drawn by two rams or he-goats, and by them to be brought to the house of the Yajamana, the institutor of the sacrifice, for whose especial benefit, and at whose expense, all the ceremonies are performed. The stems of the plants are now deposited in the hall of oblation. . . . bruised by the Brahmans with stones, and then put between two planks of wood, that they may be thoroughly squeezed and the juice expressed. The stalks, with thir expressed juice, are then placed over a strainer made of goats' hair, sprinkled with water, and squeezed by the fingers of the officiating Brahmans, one or two of which must be adorned with flat gold-rings. The juice, mixed with water, now makes its way through the strainer and drops into the Drona Kalasa, the receiving vessel placed below, and situated at that part of the Yajnavedi (or sacrificial ground), called the Yoni, or womb. . . . The juice, already diluted with water, is in the Drona Kalasa further mixed with barley, clarified butter, and the flour of a grain called by

the Marathas WARI, the Sanskrit names of which are NIVARA and TRINADHANYA. It is now allowed to ferment till a spirit is formed, after which it is drawn off for oblations to the gods in a scoop called SRUCH, and in the ladle called CHAMASA, for consumption by the officiating Brahmans. The vessel, scoop, and ladle, are all made of the wood of the catechu-tree (MIMOSA CATECHU). Nine days are mentioned in the Bhashya as required for the purificatory rites..... There are three oblations offered daily; one early in the morning, one at noon, and one at night."

The sacrifices at which such oblations were offered are very numerous.[53] The principal one seems to have been the JYOTISHTOMA, a great sacrifice, which, if complete, consisted of seven SANSTHAS or stages, each occupying the space of several days. The Mimansists, however, probably yielding to the necessity of circumstances, consider the AGNISHTOMA only, the first stage of the Jyotishtoma, as obligatory for the performance of this rite; while they look upon the six others—the Atyagnishtoma, Ukthya, Shodasin, Atiratra, Aptoryama; and Vajapeya—as voluntary and supererogatory. "The Soma offering," says Windischmann,[54] "was unquestionably the greatest and the holiest offering of the ancient Indian worship. The sound of the trickling juice is regarded as a sacred hymn. The gods drink the offered beverage; they long for it (as it does for them); they are nourished by it, and thrown into a joyous intoxication; this is the case with Indra (who performs his great deeds under its influence), with the Aswins the Maruts, and Agni. The beverage is divine, it purifies, it inspires greater joy than alcohol, it intoxicates Sukra, it is a water of life, protects and nourishes, gives health and immortality, prepares the way to heaven, destroys enemies, etc. The Samaveda distinguishes two kinds of Soma, the green and the

[53] F. Kittel, 'A Tract on Sacrifice.' Mangalore, 1872.
[54] Dissertation on the Soma worship of the Arians.

yellow; but it is the golden colour which is for the most part celebrated."[55]

And these exhilarating and inebriating properties of the plant, divested from their poetical association with the gods, sufficiently explain the religious awe in which they were held by a people which learnt to experience their influence, and ascribed them to some mysterious cause.

Having explained before that the Samaveda verses are entirely taken from the Rigveda-Sanhita, we may now show the artificial manner in which these extracts were brought together for the purpose described, and how little value they possess as a poetical anthology. The Sanhita of the Samaveda consists of two separate portions. The first is composed of five hundred and eighty-five verses; the second, contains twelve hundred and twenty-five verses.[56] The verses of the first are arranged into fifty-nine DASATI or decades, subdivided again into PRÁPATHAKAS, or chapters, with another subdivision into ARDHAPRAPATHAKAS, or half-chapters. The second portion is also divided into PRAPATHAKAS with ARDHAPRAPATHFKFS; these, however, are for the most part arranged according to triplets of verses, the first of which is already contained in the Archika portion, and thus appears twice in the Samaveda-Sanhita. This first verse is called the YONI-verse, or the womb-verse, that in which the two others—the UTTARAS—are generated, because all the modifications which take place during the intonation of the former—the modulations, disruptions of letters, stoppages, etc.—must be likewise observed at the chanting of the latter. These modifications are taught in the Ganas, or song-books, the VEYAGANA and ARANYAGANA, which contain the composition of the Archika, and the UHAGANA and UHYAGANA, which comprise that of the Staubhika. In the

[55] Muir. Orig. Sansk. Texts, iii. p. 471.

[56] The first portion is called *Archika* or *Chhandograntha* and the Second *Stanbhika* or *Uttaragrantha*.

Archika portion, the verses of the Rigveda are nearly always disjoined from the connection in which they originally stood, while a somewhat greater continuity of extracts is observed in the Staubhika. In a very valuable synopsis given by Whitney,[57] it is shown in what proportion these extracts were made from the Rigveda; it enables the student, moreover, by comparing both collections, to ascertain that the compilers of the Samaveda completely lost sight of the original nature of the Rigveda hymns, and of their poetical worth; that no respect was paid to the integrity of the poet's thoughts, or to the motives which called forth their lays. Still, however inferior the collection of the Samaveda is to that of the Rigveda, so powerful is the poetical greatness of the principal Veda, that it could not be entirely destroyed, even in the garbled assemblage of its verses in the Samaveda.

But even this mite of æsthetical praise can scarcely be bestowed on the YAJURVEDA SANHITA. Like the Samaveda, it also is a liturgic book: it also has largely drawn on the Rigveda hymns. But the first difference we observe is that its contents are not entirely taken from the principal Veda, and the second is marked by the circumstance that it often combines with verses passages in prose, which are called *yajus* (lit. "that by which the sacrifice is effected"), and have given to the Yajurveda its name. Besides, the ceremonial for which this Veda was made up is much more diversified and elaborate than that of the Samaveda, and the mystical and philosophical allusions which now and then appear in the Rigveda, probably in its latest portions, assume a more prominent place in the Yajurveda. In one word, it is *the* sacrificial Veda, as its name indicates. Hence we understand why it was looked upon in that period of Hindu civilisation which was engrossed by superstitions and rites, as the principal Veda, superior in fact to the Rigveda, where there is no system

[57] In the second volume of Weber's Indische Studien.

of rites. To Sayana, for instance, the great commentator of the Vedas, who lived only four centuries ago, the poetry of the Rigveda, and even the collection of the Samaveda, are of far less importance than the Yajurveda. "The Rigveda and Samadeva," he says, in his introduction to the Taittiriya-Sanhita, "are like fresco-paintings, whereas the Yajurveda is the wall on which they stand"[58] and it is on the ritual works connected with the oldest recension of this Veda that the speculations of the Mimansists, who refer their doctrine to the Sutras of Jaimini, are based.[59]

There is one remarkable fact to be noticed in the history of this Veda, which has no parallel in that of the other Vedas, a schism to which its collection gave rise, and which ended in the putting forth of two Yajurveda texts, the one assuming the name of the Black, the other that of the White Yajurveda. The Vishnu-Purana[60] (and nearly in the same manner the Vayu-Purana), contain the following legend concerning the origin of this schism: "Yajnavalkya, son of Brahmarati, was Vaisampayana's disciple, eminently versed in duty and obedient to his teacher. An agreement had formerly been made by the Munis, that any one of their number who should fail to attend at an assembly on Mount Meru on a certain day should incur the guilt of Brahmanicide within the period of seven nights. Vaisampayana was the only person who infringed this agreement, and he in consequence occasioned the death of his sister's child, by touching it with his foot. He then desired all his disciples to perform in his behalf an expiation which should take away his guilt, and forbade any hesitation. Yajnavalkya then said to him, "Reverend sir, what is the necessity for these faint and feeble Brahmans? *I* will perform the expiation." The wise teacher, incensed, replied to Yajna-

[58] Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.' p. 175.
[59] Goldstucker, 'Panini,' p. 9.
[60] iii. 5. 2.

valkya, "Contemner of Brahmans, give up all that thou hast learnt from me; I have no need of a disobedient disciple, who, like thee, stigmatises these eminent Brahmans as feeble." Yajnavalkya rejoined, "It was from devotion (to thee) that I said what I did; but I, too, have done with thee; here is all that I have learnt from thee." Having spoken, he vomited forth the identical Yajus texts tainted with blood, and giving them to his master, he departed at his will. The other pupils having then become transformed into partridges (TITTIRI) picked up the Yajus texts, and were thence called Taittiriyas. And those who had by their teacher's command performed the expiation, were from this performance (CHARANA) called Charakadhwaryus. Yajnavalkya then, who was habituated to the exercise of suppressing his breath, devoutly hymned the sun, desiring to obtain Yajus texts." (The hymn follows.)

"Thus celebrated with these and other praises, the sun assumed the form of a horse, and said, "Ask whatever boon thou desirest." Yajnavalkya then, prostrating himself before the lord of the day, replied, "Give me such Yajus texts as my teacher does not possess." Thus supplicated, the sun gave him the Yajus texts called AYATAYAMA, which were not known to his master. Those by whom these texts were studied were called Vajins, because the sun (when he gave them) assumed the shape of a horse (vajin)."[61]

However absurd this legend may be conceived to be, the two recensions of the Yajurveda which are preserved, plainly bear out the fact, that the "White" Yajurveda is more recent than the "Black," and that the former is evidently intended as an improvement of the latter—whence it is but reasonable to infer that such an infringement on an existing text cannot have taken place without some, and probably a great, conflict between the followers of the one and the originators of the other. To

[61] Muir, 'Orig. Sansk. Texts,' iii. pp. 32, 33.

understand, however, the nature of this improvement, we must advert to the character of the older text.

It has been stated before, that each Veda consists of a collection of hymns—the Sanhita portion—and of a Brahmana portion, which is especially intended for the explanation of the rites at the performance of which the hymns were employed. This division is maintained in its purity so far as the Rig and Sama-veda are concerned. It is greatly obscured, however, in the Taittiriya-Sanhita, or that of the "Black" Yajur-veda. There, verses and description of ritual occur promiscuously; it is in reality a text-book for the guidance of the Adhwarya priest, while the Hotri and Udgatri had to study their special ritual books, in order to know when any particular verse of their Sanhitas ought to come in at a certain rite. This motley character of the Taittiriya-Sanhita is probably indicated by the epithet "Black," or "Dark," which is given to the oldest recension of the Yajurveda: and though the Tittiris may be a real proper name, the meaning of this word being "partridge," it is not impossible that this coincidence suggested the etymological legend mentioned above. Now, the impurity of this text, as intimated by the legend, its "darkness," as it were, is removed in the "White" Yajurveda, which is ascribed to the Rishi Yajnavalkya; for in the latter we possess a "clear" Sanhita and a "clear" Brahmana.

The topics treated of in both redactions are on the whole the same, but they are differently placed, and vary sometimes in detail. The ASWAMEDH[62] or horse sacrifice, which is merely alluded to in a few hymns of the Rigveda-Sanhita, is dwelt upon in the Yajurveda with considerable detail. The fact of six hundred and nine animals of various descriptions, domestic and wild, including birds and reptiles, being tied to twenty-one posts, and the intervals between them, at the performance of this sacrifice, may convey an idea of the complicated ritual

[62] Kittel, l. l., 37 ff.

which existed at the time when this Veda was composed. Of ceremonies, unknown to the other Vedas, we may mention also, the PURUSHA-MEDHA[63] or man-sacrifice —an emblematic ceremony, in which a hundred and eighty-five men of various specified tribes, characters, and professions, are bound to eleven posts, and consecrated to various deities—the SARVA-MEDHA or all-sacrifice, and the PITRI-MEDHA or sacrifice to the manes. It is worthy of notice, too, not only that all the four castes, the institution of which cannot with certainty be traced to the period of the Rigveda-Sanhita, make their distinct appearance in the Yajurveda, but also that it contains many words which in the mythology of the epic poems and the Puranas are names of Siva, the third god of the later Hindu triad.

The Taittiriya-Sanhita of the Black Yajurveda is arranged in seven KANDA or books, with forty-four PRAPATHAKA or chapters, containing altogether six hundred and fifty-one ANUVAKA or sections divided into two thousand one hundred and ninety-eight KANDIKA or portions. The VAJASANEYI-SANHITA of the White Yajurveda, in the Madhyandina recension, is divided into forty ADHYAYA or lectures, with three hundred and three ANUVAKA or sections, comprising one thousand nine hundred and seventy-five KANDIKA or portions. Other schools connected with either form of this Veda adopted other divisions, which, however, need not be adverted to here.

That the SANHITA of the ATHARVAVEDA is not a sacrificial collection in the sense of that of the Sama- and Yajur-veda we have explained already. It is divided into twenty KANDA or books, the first eighteen of which contain thirty-four PRAPATHAKA or chapters, which comprise ninety-four ANUVAKA or sections: the seventeenth Kanda consisting of one Prapathaka only, which has no further subdivision; the nineteenth Kanda is not divided into Prapathakas, but simply into seven Anuvakas; and the

[63] Jour. As. Soc. Bengal, vol. xiv. i. 76 ff.

twentieth contains nine Anuvakas, the third of which has three PARYAYAS. The Anuvakas in their turn consist of about six thousand verses. "Its first eighteen books," of which alone it was originally composed, Whitney, the learned editor of the 'Atharvasanhita,' observes[64] "are arranged upon a like system throughout: the length of the hymns, and not either their subject or their alleged authorship, being the guiding principle; those of about the same number of verses are combined together into books, and the books made up of the shorter hymns stand first in order. A sixth of the mass, however, is not metrical, but consists of longer or shorter prose pieces, nearly akin in point of language and style to passages of the Brahmanas. Of the remainder, or metrical portion, about one-sixth is also found amongst the hymns of the Rik, and mostly in the tenth book of the latter; the rest is peculiar to the Atharva. Respecting their authorship the tradition has no information of value to give; they are with few exceptions attributed to mythical personages.

"As to the internal character of the Atharva hymns, it may be said of them, as of the tenth book of the Rik, that they are the productions of another and a later period, and the expressions of a different spirit, from that of the earlier hymns in the other Veda. In the latter, the gods are approached with reverential awe, indeed, but with love and confidence also; a worship is paid to them that exalts the offerer of it; the demons, embraced under the general name RAKSHAS, are objects of horror, whom the gods ward off and destroy; the divinities of the Atharva are regarded rather with a kind of cringing fear, as powers whose wrath is to be deprecated and whose favour curried for; it knows a whole host of imps and hobgoblins, in ranks and classes, and addresses itself

[64] Journal of the American Oriental Society,' vol. iv. p. 254.

to them directly, offering them homage to induce them to abstain from doing harm. The MANTRA, prayer which in the older Veda is the instrument of devotion, is here rather the tool of superstition; it wrings from the unwilling hands of the gods the favours which of old their good-will to men induced them to grant, or by simple magical power obtains the fulfilment of the utterer's wishes. The most prominent characteristic feature of the Atharva is the multitude of incantations which it contains; these are pronounced either by the person who is himself to be benefited, or, more often, by the sorcerer for him, and are directed to the procuring of the greatest variety of desirable ends; most frequently, perhaps, long life, or recovery from grievous sickness, is the object sought; then a talisman, such as a necklace, is sometimes given, or in very numerous cases some plant endowed with marvellous virtues is to be the immediate external means of the cure; farther, the attainment of wealth or power is aimed at, the downfall of enemies, success in love or in play, the removal of petty pests, and so on, even down to the growth of hair on a bald pate. There are hymns, too, in which a single rite or ceremony is taken up and exalted, somewhat in the same strain as the Soma in the Pavamanya hymns of the Rik. Others of a speculative mystical character are not wanting; yet their number is not so great as might naturally be expected, considering the development which the Hindu religion received in the periods following after that of the primitive Veda. It seems in the main that the Atharva is of popular rather than of priestly origin: that in making the transition from the Vedic to modern times, it forms an intermediate step, rather to the gross idolatries and supersitions of the ignorant mass, than to the sublimated pantheism of the Brahmans."[65]

The general character of the BRAHMANA, or dogmatic, portion of the Vedas having been explained before,

[65] Ib. vol. iii. p. 307.

a short notice of the principal works of that class, and a few extracts from them, will illustrate the position they hold between the collection of hymns and the remainder of the Vaidik literature.

The Brahmana of the Bahvrichas, by the priests of the Rigveda, is still ppreserved in two editions. The former—the AITAREYA BRAHMANA—consists of eight PANCHIKA or pentades of ADHYAYAS, thus comprising forty Adhyayas or lectures, which again are subdivided into two hundred and eighty-five KHANDA or portions. The latter, the SANKHAYANA-BRAHMANA, which bears also the name of the KAUSHITAKI-BRAHMANA, consists of thirty Adhyayas, likewise subdivided into a number of Khandas. Both Brahmanas contain on the whole the same matter; but the difference of the manner in which their subjects are arranged and treated leads to the supposition that the first thirty lectures of the Aitareya-Brahmana are older than those of the Sankhayana, whereas the last ten lectures of the former contain rites not explained in the latter, and are probably therefore more recent than the Sankhayana. These Brahmanas do not follow the order of the hymns of the Rigveda-Sanhita, but quote them as they would be required by the Hotri priest for the performance of the rites described. In order to give an idea of the elaborate ceremonial which called these Brahmanas into life, and of the mysticism which connects them with a subsequent class of works, we will first give an abstract of an important ceremony, treated of with great detail in the last books of the Aitareya-Brahmana, and several times alluded to in the epic poetry of the Mahabharata and Ramayana,—the *Abhisheka* or inauguration of a king.

This ceremony is either part of a Rajasuya, and performed by a king at the end of this sacrifice, or it is not part of a sacrifice, and then occurs at a king's accession to the throne. For celebrating the former ceremony there must have been prepared a throne-seat of the wood of the

UDUMBARA,[66] resting on four legs a span high, with boards placed on them, and side-boards of the dimensions of a cubit or two spans; the whole well fastened together with a texture made of cords of MUNJA grass;[67] a tiger skin, which is placed on the seat with the hair upward and the neck to the east, a large four-cornered ladle of UDUMBARA wood, and a branch of the same. In the ladle have been put eight things: curd, honey, clarified butter, water proceeding from rain during sunshine, before it has fallen down, blades of SYAMA grass, sprouts, spirituous liquor, and DU'B grass.[68] To prepare a site for the throne three lines have been drawn on a place of sacrifice. . . . . . one southwards, another westwards, and a third northwards; the one to the south is that on which the throne is to be placed, with its front towards the east, so that the two feet to the north come to stand within the VEDI or sacrificial ground, and the two to the south without; this latter spot occupied by the throne seat is called SRI (comm., as a type of happiness or prosperity). The place within the VEDI being small, but that without being illimited, this portion of the throne indicates that the sacrificer may obtain definite and indefinite wishes within and without the VEDI. The tiger skin is the type of increase of military power, for the tiger is the hero of the wild beasts; the undumbara wood of the throne, ladle and branch, is the type of nourishing juice and of food (which the sacrificer is supposed to acquire by this symbol); curd, honey, and clarified butter typify the essence of water and plants (curd and butter, as the commentator observes, because they originate in grass and water, which are the food of cattle; honey, because it originates in the juice of plants collected by bees): water proceeding from rain during sunshine, before it has fallen down, typifies lustre (or energy); and rain

[66] *Ficus glomerata.*
[67] *Saccharum Munja.*
[68] *Panicum dactylon.*

(being the consequence of oblations to the gods) holiness; grass and sprouts typify food, hence prosperity and progeny; spirituous liquor is the type of a Kshatriya's power (comm., on account of its fierceness or hotness); Dub grass (being the Kshatriya of the plants, and firmly established in the soil with its many roots) is the type of military power and of a firmly established rule. The principal features of the ceremony itself are the following. The king, who performs the sacrifice, kneels down at the back part of the throne-seat with his face to the east, and his right knee touching the ground. He then touches with his hands the throne-seat, and invites the gods to ascend it together with various metres—AGNI with the metre Gayatri, SAVITRI with the Ushnih, SOMA with the Anushtubh, BRIHASPATI with the Brihati, MITRA and VARUNA with the Pankti, INDRA with the Trishtubh, the VISWE DEVAS with the Jagati—for the purpose of obtaining "kingly power, righteous government, increase of enjoyment, independent rule, attainment of more distinguished qualities than those possessed by other kings, coming (after death) into the world of Brahman, and obtaining there dominion, a mighty rule, mastership, independence, and a long residence there." The gods have arrived, and the king now ascends himself the throne-seat, first with his right and then with his left knee. The next ceremony is the propitiation of the liquid in the ladle, which is performed by the priest, who will pour it over the king by reciting these verses (from the Atharvaveda): "Waters, behold me with a favourable eye; with a favourable body touch my skin: all fires, for they reside in water, I invoke on your account; do not produce in me beauty, bodily strength, and energy:" and by the king repeating these words after him. If this propitiation did not take place, the liquid would destroy the vigour of the king. After this, the priest covers the head of the king with the udumbara branch, and pours the liquid over him while reciting the following three

Rigveda verses: "These waters are most propitious; they have healing power to free from all disease; they are the augmenters of kingly power and its supporters; they are immortal." "With which Prajapati (the lord of creatures) sprinkled Indra, the king Soma and Manu, with these I sprinkle thee, that thou becomest king of kings in this world." "The queen, thy mother, bore thee to be great amongst the great, and a righteous ruler over men; an auspicious mother bore thee." And this Yajurveda verse: "The divine Savitri has given his consent, therefore, I pour (this liquid) over thee with the arms of the Aswins (comm., not with my own), with the hands of Pushan, with the beauty of Agni, with the radiance of Surya and with the senses of Indra, for the sake of strength, prosperity, glory, and increase of food." After the recital of other verses, by which spirituous liquor and Soma are intended to become identified, the king drinks the liquor, and presents the rest to a friend. He then places the udumbara branch on the ground, and prepares himself for descending from the throne-seat; but while he is still seated, and puts his feet on the ground, he says: "I firmly stand on heaven and earth, I firmly stand on exhaled and inhaled air, I firmly stand on day and night, I firmly stand on food and drink; on what is Brahmana, on what is Kshatriya—on these three worlds stand I firmly!" He then descends, sits down on the ground with his face towards the east, utters thrice the words, "adoration to what is Brahmana!" and offers a gift (comm., a cow) to a Brahmana. The object of this gift is the attainment of victory in every quarter, and over every description of enemies; and his threefold expression of adoration to what is a Brahmana, implies that a kingdom prospers and has valiant men when it is under the control of the Brahmanas, and that a valiant son will be born to him. Then the king rises, puts fuel into the sacrificial fire, and takes three steps to the east, north, and to the north-east, while reciting several verses specified. Upon this he sits down by the domestic fire, and

the Adhwaryu priest makes for him, out of a goblet, four times three oblations, with clarified butter, to Indra, while reciting other Rigveda verses. "A king for whom these libations are made to Indra in the indicated manner, becomes free from disease, cannot be injured by enemies, is exempt from poverty, everywhere protected against danger, and thus becomes victorious in all the quarters, and, after death, established in Indra's heaven."

The rites of the Abhisheka ceremony, which are performed at a king's accession to the throne, are founded on the proceedings which are described as having taken place when Indra was consecrated by the gods as their supreme ruler. The latter are, as a matter of course, of an entirely mystical kind. Thus, the eight parts of his throne-seat are said to have consisted of Samaveda verses; of the threads of the texture which was to hold his structure together, those that went lengthwise were made of Rigveda-, and those that went crossways of Samaveda-, the intervals being Yajurveda-verses: the covering of the throne was the goddess of Glory, the pillow the goddess of Happiness; Savitri and Brihaspati supported the fore-legs, Vayu and Pushan the hind legs, Mitra and Varuna the two top boards, and the two Aswins the two side-boards, of the throne-seat, &c. The inauguration of the mortal king begins with the priest calling upon him to take the following oath;—"If I (the king) do ever harm to thee, thou (the priest) mayst deprive me of all pious acts which I have done from the time of my birth up to that of my death, of heaven, and whatever else good has been accomplished by me, of long life and offspring." He then orders his attendants to bring four kinds of fruits: the fruit of the NYAGRODHA,[69] of the UDUMBARA,[70] of the ASWATTHA,[71] and of the PLAKSHA;[72] besides four

[69] *Ficus Indica.*
[70] *Ficus glomerata.*
[71] *Ficus religiosa.*
[72] *Ficus infectoria.*

kinds of grain; rice with small grain, rice with large grain, PRIYANGU, and barley. Next they bring at his command a throne-seat of udumbara-wood (made in a manner as described before), a ladle of udumbara (or, instead of the latter, a vessel of udumbara), and an udumbara branch. Then they put the various kinds of fruit and grain in the ladle or vessel, and pour over them curds, honey, clarified butter and water proceeding from rain during sunshine, before it has fallen down; afterwards, having placed the ladle or vessel on the ground they address the throne-seat with a Mantra, which recalls the component parts of Indra's throne, and thus tends to identify both. Then the priest asks the king to ascend the throne-seat, inviting the Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, and the other divinities which were invited by Indra at his inauguration to ascend his throne, with the same metres and songs, and for the same purposes. Upon this the relatives of the king proclaim his high qualities in the same words as the gods proclaimed the greatness of Indra; the priest recites a certain Rigveda verse, and, placing himself before the throne with his face towards the west, covers the head of the king with the udumbara branch, the leaves of which have been wetted, and with a gold Pavitra, and sprinkles him with the liquid (in the ladle or vessel) while reciting the three Rigveda verses, and the Yajurveda verses quoted above, and uttering the three sacred words BHUR BHUVAR SWAR. Lastly, he addresses the king with the prayer that the Vasus, the Rudras, and the other divinities who performed this ceremony for Indra in the east, south, &c., may severally do the same for him in thirty-one successive days, and to the same effect as they did it for him. Of the ingredients of the sacred liquid, the Nyagrodha, being, on account of its wide spread, the king of the trees, and rice with small grains, being among plants principally productive of strength, the fruit of the former and the grain of the latter are the type of the qualities of a Kshatra; the fruit of the udumbara and the

grains of the Priyangu are the type of increase of enjoyment; the fruit of the Aswattha and rice with large grains, the type of righteous government; the fruit of the Plaksha, the type of independent rule and attainment of more distinguished qualities than those possessed by other kings; barley is the type of military commandership; curds, that of sharpness of the senses; honey, that of the essence of plants and trees; and water is the type of freedom from death, or that of long life (because it nourishes). The ceremony having been completed, the king has to make a present to the inaugurating priest, namely a thousand nishkas of gold, a field, and cattle, but this amount seems merely to constitute a minimum acknowledgement of the exertions of the priest, for the text of the Aitareya-Brahmana adds that "they say, a king should give innumerable, illimited presents, since a king is illimited (in wealth), and thus will obtain illimited benefit to himself," and it adds, too, several instances in which kings bestowed unbounded wealth on the officiating priests. After the priest has received the gift, he hands to the king a goblet of spirituous liquor in reciting an appropriate Rigveda hymn, which has the power of transforming the qualities of the liquor drunk by the king into those of the juice of the Soma-plant. Lastly, the king recites some other verses specified.[73]

As an illustration of those passages of the Aitareya-Brahmana, which partake more of an incantatory nature, we may quote the description of a rite which occurs in its last chapter, and relates to rites to be performed, under the direction of a proper Purohita, or chaplain, for the destruction of the king's enemies. "Foes, enemies, and rivals," we read there, "perish around him who is conversant with these rites. That which (moves) in the atmosphere is air (Brahman), around which perish five deities—lightnings, rain, the moon, the sun, and

[73] For a fuller account of this ceremony, compare Goldstucker's 'Sanskrit Dictionary,' s. v. 'Abhisheka.'

fire. Lightning having flashed, disappears behind rain: it vanishes, and none knows (whither it is gone). When a man dies, he vanishes; and none knows (whither his soul is gone). Therefore, whenever lightning flashes, pronounce this prayer: 'May my enemy perish: may he disappear, and none know (where he is).' Soon, indeed, none will know (whither he is gone). Rain having fallen (evaporates and), disappears within the moon, &c. When rain ceases, pronounce this (prayer), &c. The moon at the conjunction, disappears within the sun, &c. When the moon is dark, pronounce, &c(The sun when setting, disappears in fire, &c. When the sun sets, pronounce, &c. Fire, ascending, disappears in air, &c. When fire is extinguished, pronounce, &c The same deities are again produced from this very origin. Fire is born of air; for, urged with force by the breath, it increases. Viewing it, pronounce (this prayer), 'May fire be revived; but not my foe be reproduced; may he depart averted.' Therefore, does the enemy go far away. The sun is born of fire. Viewing it, say, 'May the sun rise, but not my foe be reproduced,' &c. . . The observance (enjoined) to him (who undertakes these rites, is as follows): let him not sit down earlier than the foe; but stand while he thinks him standing. Let him not lie down earlier than the foe; but sit while he thinks him sitting. Let him not sleep earlier than the foe, but wake while he thinks him waking. Though his enemy had a head of stone, soon does he slay him; he does slay him."[74]

The legends narrated in this, as well as in other Brahmanas, intend always, as indicated before, to explain the origin of a rite, or to illustrate its efficacy. Among those met with in the Aitareya-Brahmana, we may point particularly to one, as it is remarkable in several respects. It had to be recited by the Hotri, sitting on a gold-embroidered carpet, to a king whose inaugura-

[74] Colebrooke, 'Misc. Ess.,' i. p. 45. See also Haug, Aitareya Brahmana, viii. 5, 28.

tion had been completed; and another priest, sitting on a similar carpet, had to repeat the words of the Hotri. But a victorious king is likewise recommended to have this legend recited to him, though he may not have performed the sacrifice; and a man desirous of progeny is promised the birth of a son if it is properly read to him. We mean the legend of SUNAHSEPA. Its substance is as follows:

Once upon a time there lived Harischandra, a son of Vedhas, and a descendant of Ikshwaku. Though he had a hundred wives, he did not obtain a son from them. His desire, however, of having one became still stronger than it was, when Parvata, and Narada visited him, and when Narada explained to him the boons a man derives from being blessed with the birth of a son. Following the advice of Narada, Harishchandra addressed himself, therefore, to Varuna and promised the god to sacrifice him his son, if he granted him one. Varuna assented to the offer. Now a son, who recived the name of Rohita, being born to Harishchandra, Varuna presented himself, and claimed the fulfilment of the compact. But Harischandra said: "Cattle is fit for a sacrifice when it is ten days old; let him then become ten days old and I shall sacrifice him to thee." Varuna assented: but the ten days having passed away Harischandra again said: "Cattle is fit for a sacrifice when it was got teeth; let him then get teeth, and I shall sacrifice him to thee." Once more Varuna assented; but when Rohita had got his teeth, his father said to Varuna: "Cattle is fit for a sacrifice when it loses again its teeth; let him then lose his teeth, and I shall sacrifice him to thee." Again Varuna assented; but Rohita having lost his teeth, his father said to Varuna: "Cattle is fit for a sacrifice when it recovers its teeth; let him then recover his teeth, and I shall sacrifice him to thee." Varuna assented; but Rohita having recovered his teeth, his father said to Varuna: "A warrior is fit for a sacrifice when he is able to use his weapon; let him then learn to use his weapon,

and I shall sacrifice him to thee." Again Varuna assented; and when Rohita knew how to use his weapon, his father said to him: "Varuna, my son, has given thee to me, and I shall sacrifice thee to him." But Rohita refused, took his bow and went to the forest, where he wandered about during a whole year. Varuna, however, now seized Harischandra and made him swell. On hearing this, Rohita went about and met Indra, who encouraged him to wander first for another, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth year.

At the end of this period he saw in the forest a Rishi of the name of Ajigarta, the son of Suyavasa, who lived there in great poverty with his three sons SUNASPUCHCHHA, SUNAHSEPA, and SUNOLANGULA. Rohita offered him a hundred cows if he gave up one of his sons to be sacrificed instead of him to Varuna. Ajigarta accepted the offer but retained his oldest son; and his wife claiming the youngest, both agreed to give up Sunahsepa. Rohita then took him to his father, Harishchandra, and Varuna also having confirmed the barter, since, he thought, a Brahmana is of greater value than a Kshatriya, Harischandra in celebrating the rite of Rajusuya substituted Sunahsepa for the victim to be immolated at this sacrifice. The Hotri priest who officiated at it was Viswamitra, Jamadagni fulfilled the functions of the Adhwaryu, Vasishtha those of the Brahman, and Ayasya those of the Udgatri. Yet the preliminary rites having being fulfilled, no one could be found who would tie Sunahsepa to the sacrificial post. Upon which Ajigarta offered to do this if they gave him another hundred of cows. They did so; but though Sunahsepa now was tied to the post, no one would immolate him. Again Ajigarta came forward and promised to immolate his son if they would give him a third hundred of cows. They did so, and Ajigarta sharpened his knife and approached his son. Now Sunahsepa resolved to implore the gods to release him. He addressed himself first to Prajapati with an appropriate Rigveda hymn, but the god told him to pray to Agni. Agni,

invoked with another hymn, told him to pray to Savitri; and Savitri told him to address Varuna; but Varuna sent him once more to Agni, who now recommended him to praise all the gods with an appropriate hymn. Sunahsepa obeyed; his ties were released, and Harischandra was restored to health. Sunahsepa, on his part, now instituted a new sacrifice. But when he placed himself at the side of Viswamitra, and Ajigarta claimed him back, Viswamitra replied: "No, the gods (DEVAS) have given him (ARASATA) to me;" and from that time (he was no longer Sunahsepa, that is, (Dogstail), but Devarata (*theodotos*) the son of Viswamitra.[75]

After these instances, which will convey an idea of the contents of the Brahmana in general, we must content ourselves with giving the names of the other *principal* works of this category. For, the difference which exists between them, however great, would be intelligible only if we could enter into the detail of the Vaidik rites, and into the growth of the legendary life which pervades this portion of the ancient literature of India.

Suffice it therefore to state that the Brahmana literature has found its greatest development in the train of the Veda which, as we might expect, would require more than any other Veda an explanation of the purposes for which it was formed—the Yajurveda. On the other hand, since the Sanhita of the Black Yajurveda is already a combination, as we have seen, of hymns and Brahmana, it is intelligible that we find in connection with the White Yajurveda that Brahmana which, though probably the most recent, still is the most systematic and the most complete of all the Brahmanas. It is called the SATAPATHA-BRAHMANA, and is ascribed, like the Sanhita of the

[75] For a literal and excellent translation of this legend by Professor Roth, see Weber's 'Indische Studien,' i. p. 458, ff.; and for some additional remarks, *ibid.*, ii. p. 112, ff. Also, Muir, 'Ancient Sanskrit Texts', I², 355-60.

White Yajurveda, to Yajnavalkya. It is, like the Sanhita, preserved in the edition of the MADHYANDINA and in that of the KANWA school. The former is divided into fourteen KANDA or books, which contain one hundred ADHYAYA or lectures; or into sixty-eight PRAPATHAKA (sections) with four hundred and thirty eight BRAHMANA, and seven thousand six hundred and twenty-four KANDIKA (portions). In the KANWA edition it comprises seventeen KANDA, with a hundred and four ADHYAYA, four hundred and forty-six BRAHMANA, and five thousand eight hundred and sixty-six KANDIKA. The first nine Kanda of this Brahmana follow the first eighteen books of the Sanhita almost step for step, in quoting their verses and explaining their application at the sacrifices. The last five Kandas, however, refer only partially—some even not at all—to the contents of the Sanhita, and may therefore be a later increase of this extensive Brahmana, which is extremely rich in antiquarian and mythological contents; but on account of its purely ritual character, cannot be understood without the complete and excellent commentary of Sayana.

The Brahmana of the Black Yajurveda is preserved in the school of the Taittiriyas, and bears the name of the Taittiriya-Brahmana, differing but little in character from its Sanhita.

As regards the Samaveda, Sayana enumerates eight Brahmanas connected with it, namely, the PRAUDHA (also called TANDYA- or PANCHAVINSA), the SHADVINSA, the SAMAVIDHI, ARSHEYA-BRAHMANA, the DEVATADHYAYA-BRAHMANA, and the UPANISHAD, which, according to Muller[76] is probably the CHHANDOGYA-UPANISHAD.[77] The first two are the most important of these works, the Panchavinsa

[76] 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.' p. 349.

[77] To these should be added the Sanhitopanishad, and the Vansa-Brahmana. See Burnell's edition of the Samavidhana-Brahmana, I. Introd., and Weber's 'Indische Literaturgeschichte, 2nd edition, p. 81 f.

treating of the sacrifices which are performed with the juice of the Soma-plant, in rites which last from one to one hundred days. The SHADVINSA is remarkable on account of the incantatory ceremonies it describes; it ends with a chapter on omens and the rites to be performed on unlucky occasions, such as diseases, or at portentous occurrences, such as earthquakes, unusual phenomena, and the like.

The Brahmana of the Atharvaveda is the GOPATHA-BRAHMANA. "That it was composed after the schism of the Charakas and Vajasaneyins (the followers of the Black and White Yajurveda), and after the completion of the Vajasaneyi-Sanhita, may be gathered from the fact that where the first lines of the other Vedas are quoted in the Gopatha, the first line of the Yajurveda is taken from the Vajasaneyins, and not from the Taittiriyas. It is more explicit on the chapter of accidents than the Brahmanas of the other Vedas. . . . The ceremonial in general is discussed in it in the same manner as in the other Brahmanas."[78]

The Sanhita or collection of Mantra, and the Brahmana, constitute that which is properly called the sacred literature of the Hindus, THE VEDA; they are also comprised under the name of SRUTI or revelation. But in speaking of the Veda we should not feel justified in leaving unnoticed that class of works, one portion of which is so intimately connected with it that it was held by later generations in the same awe as the Veda, whereas another portion has become so essential an appendage to it, that it was justly called Vedanga, or "limb of the Veda."

The former category comprises the theological or theosophical writings, which have sprung from the Brahmanas, and are perhaps more popular among Euro-

[78] Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.,' pp. 451, 452. Also Rajendralal Mitra's introduction to his edition of the Gopatha-Brahmana, Calcutta, 1872, p. 11-37.

pean students than any other portion of the Vaidik literature—the UPANISHADS. The word UPANISHAD is rendered by the Indian dictionaries "mystery." SANKARA, the great Vedanta philosopher and glossator of the Upanishads, assumes that the word being derived from the radical *sad*,—with the prefixes *upa* and *ni*,—which amongst others has also the sense of "destroying," literally means the science which destroys erroneous ideas or ignorance. European scholars, on the contrary, have expressed the belief that it "means originally the art of sitting down near a teacher, of submissively listening to him" (from *upa* "below," *ni* "down," and *sad* "to sit;").* But there is a strong probability that the word has been already used by a Hindu grammarian, who preceded the existence of the Upanishad works, in the sense of "secret";[79] and since this meaning is not incompatible with the etymology of the word—which may signify "entering into that which is hidden"—it seems certain that at no period the Upanishads were looked upon as mere lessons imparted to their pupils by old divines, but as the mysterious science which, through bestowing real knowledge on the human mind, leads to the attainment of eternal bliss.

For such is the object of all the Upanishads; and the knowledge they intend to convey is chiefly that of the production and nature of the world, of the properties of a Supreme Divinity, and those of the human soul, which they conceive to be part of it. The same object is pursued, and the same views of the nature of the divine and the human soul as in the Upanishads are entertained by the Vedanta philosophy. We perceive therefore at once the close connection which exists between the Upanishads and this orthodox system of Hindu philosophy. Their difference, indeed, is merely that which separates the beginning from the end of a certain

* Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.,' p. 319.

[79] Goldstucker, 'Panini,' p. 141, note 164.

kind of philosophical reasoning. In the Vedanta the Hindu mind possesses a system which endeavours to deduct and to connect its ideas on the creation of the world, on the identity of the absolute and individual soul. Its method would not stand the test of our philosophical reasoning; but its explanations evidently aim at scientific precision and shortness of expression, and they are generally free from mythological mysticism. In the Upanishads, on the contrary, there is merely the material for a system of philosophy. The subject treated of by them is frequently dealt with in a desultory manner; it is intercepted by legends and allegories; it is adapted to the form of dialogues; it abounds in repetitions and verbose phraseology. But all these negative features of the Upanishads must be viewed in the mirror of the Hindu mind; and then we easily comprehend that, accessible to the popular understanding of the educated, they became the basis of that more enlightened belief which at all periods of Indian history has struggled against the idolatry and the gross practices produced by a misconception of the sacred texts, and doubtless also by the interested motives of a degenerated class of priests.

Within the circle of the Upanishad literature several periods are clearly distinguishable, though Sanskrit philology possesses no means of rendering them into intelligible dates. The first is that of the ARANYAKA. As the name indicates, and as it is explained by KATYAYANA in one of his criticisms on the great grammarian PANINI, this class of Upanishads was studied in the solitude of the forests, apparently because it was thought necessary that the mind should divest itself from all contact with the world when meditating on the mysteries of life. These ARANYAKAS are more immediately connected with the Brahmanas than the Upanishads properly so called. The Brihad-Aranyaka, for instance, is a part itself of the Satapatha-Brahmana of the White Yajurveda; the Aitaraya-Aranyaka is added to the Aitareya-Brahmana, and the Chhandogya-Upanishad, as we have

seen, though not bearing the name of an Aranyaka, is counted amongst the Brahmanas of the Samaveda. These works combine their speculations with a considerable amount of legendary detail, in the same way as the Brahmanas themselves; and they are held in especial respect on account of the obscure allusions in which they abound. A second class is much less burdened with mythological and allegorical detail; it is brief, and addresses itself more to the philosophical mind; it comprises the greater mass of the Upanishad literature, and is apparently more recent than the Aranyakas. A third and last category is marked by the tendency it has to reconcile the doctrines of later sects with Vaidik theology; Upanishads belonging to it identify the universal Spirit with one or the other form of the gods of the Trimurti, as it appears in sectarian belief. This latter description of Upanishads is chiefly connected with the Atharvaveda. We choose as an instance of the Aranyaka class the following passages from the Aitareya-Aranyaka: "This (world) verily was before (the creation of the world) soul alone, and nothing else whatsoever active (or non-active). He reflected: 'Let me create the worlds.' He created these worlds, namely, the sphere of water, the sphere of the sunbeams, the sphere of death, and the sphere of the waters. The sphere of water lies above the heavens, the heavens are its resting place; the phere of the sunbeams is the atmosphere; the earth the world of death; the worlds which are beneath it, are the sphere of the waters. He reflected: These worlds indeed are created. Let me create the protectors of the world. Taking out from the waters a being of human shape, he formed him. He heated him (by the heat of his meditation). When he was thus heated, the mouth burst out as the egg (of a bird),—from the mouth speech,—from speech fire. The nostrils burst out,—from the nostrils breath,—from breath the wind. The eyes burst out,—from the eyes sight,—from the sight the sun. The ears burst out,—from the ears hearing,—from hearing the regions of space, &c. . .

He reflected: These worlds and protectors of the worlds (have been created). Let me now create food for them. He heated the waters (with the heat of his reflection). From them when heated, a being of organised form sprung forth; the form which sprung forth is verily food. When created it cried (by fear), and tried to flee. He (the first-born male) desired to seize it by speech. Had he seized it by speech (all) would be satisfied by pronouncing food. He desired to seize it by breath; he could not seize it by breathing. Had he taken it by breathing (all) would be satisfied by smelling food, &c . . Of what nature is the SOUL which we worship by the words 'this soul,' and which of the two (the universal and individual) is the soul? (Are the instruments by which objects are perceived the soul, or the perceiver? No, not the instruments). Is it that by which the soul sees form, by which it hears sound, by which it apprehends smells, by which it expresses speech, by which it distinguishes what is of good, and what is not of good taste? The heart and the mind, knowledge about one's self, knowledge about one's power, the knowledge of the sixty-four sciences, the knowledge of what is practicable at this or another time, understanding of instruction, perception, endurance of pain, thinking, independence of mind, sensibility, recollection, determination, perseverance, desire, submission—all these are names of knowledge (as an attribute of the soul in its modification as life, of the inferior Brahman, not attributes of the supreme Brahman, which is of no form whatsoever). This soul is Brahman (the inferior Brahman), this Indra, this Prajapati, this all gods and the five great elements and the light. . . . All this is brought to existence by knowledge, is founded on knowledge; the world is brought into existence by knowledge; knowledge itself is the foundation; Brahman is knowledge."[80]

[80] Roer's 'Translation of the Upan., Bibl. Ind.,'

In the Brihad-Aranyaka it is told that Janaka, the king of the Videhas, performed a sacrifice at which many Brahmans were assembled. The king having a great desire to know who among those Brahmans knew best the Vedas, tied a thousand cows in a stable, and covered the horns of each of them with ten pada of gold. He then said to the pious men: "O venerable Brahmans, whoever amongst you is the best knower of Brahman shall drive home these cows." The Brahmans, however, did not venture to come forward. Then said Yajnavalkya to his student: "Drive home those cows." But the Brahmans became angry, and began to examine the sage as to his knowledge of the Veda. "Then asked him Uddalaka, the son of Aruna," the legend continues,—" 'Yajnavalkya,' said he, 'in the country of the Madras we abode in the house of Patanchala, of the family of Kapi, for the sake of studying the science of offering. His wife was possessed by a Gandharva. We asked him (the Gandharva), 'Who art thou?' He said 'Kabandha, the son of Atharvana.' He said to Patanchala, of the family of Kapi, and to (us) priests, 'O Kapya, knowest thou that Thread by which this world and the other world, and all beings are bound together?" Patanchala, of the family of Kapi, said, 'I do not know it, O Venerable.' He said to Patanchala, and to (us) priests,—'Knowest thou, O Kapya, that Inner Ruler who within rules this world, and the other world, and all beings?" Patanchala said,—'I do not know this, O Venerable.' He said to Patanchala, and to (us) priests, —'O Kapya, whoever knows the Thread and the Inner Ruler, knows Brahman, knows the worlds, knows the gods, knows the Vedas, knows the elements, knows the soul,—knows all.' Then (the Gradharva) said (all about the Thread and the Inner Ruler) to them. 'Therefore do I know this. If thou, O Yajnavalkya, ignorant of the Thread and the Inner Ruler, hast taken away the cows

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vol. xv. p. 28, ff. Also Aitareya-Aranyaka, ed. Rajendralala Mitra. Calc., 1876. Introduction.

(destined for the best knower of Brahman), thy head will certainly drop down.' I know verily, Gautama, the Thread and the Inner Ruler.' 'Any one may say this, I know, I know, but tell the manner in which thou knowest.' He said—'The wind, O Gautama, is the Thread; by the wind, as by a thread, are this world, the other world, all beings bound together, O Gautama. Therefore, O Gautama, it is said of a dead man, that his members are relaxed; for by the wind, O Gautama, as by a thread, they are bound together.' 'This is so, O Yajnavalkya; now explain the Inner Ruler.' 'He who dwelling in the earth is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who within rules the earth, is thy soul,—the Inner Ruler—immortal. He who dwelling in the waters is within the waters, whom the waters do not know, whose body are the waters, who within rules the waters, is thy soul,—the Inner Ruler—immortal. He who dwelling in the fire is within the fire, &c....he who dwelling in the atmosphere, &c....he who dwelling in the wind, &c...in the heavens, &c....in the sun, &c....in the regions of space, &c.... in the moon and stars, &c....in the ether, &c....in the darkness, &c.... in the light, &c....in all elements, etc. in the vital air, &c... in speech, &c....in the eye, &c....in the ear, &c....in the mind, &c....in the skin, &c....in knowledge, &c....; he who dwelling in the seed is within the seed, whom the seed does not know, whose body is the seed, who from within rules the seed, is thy soul—the Inner Ruler—immortal. Unseen, he sees; unheard, he hears; unminded, he minds; unknown, he knows. There is none that sees, but he; there is none that hears, but he; there is none that minds, but he; there is none that knows, but he. He is thy soul —the Inner Ruler—immortal. Whatever is different from him is perishable.'' '[81]

An Upanishad of the second class is, for instance, the Isa Upanishad, which derives an additional interest

[81] Ib., vol. ii. part iii., p. 199, ff.

from the circumstance that it is the only Upanishad which forms part of a Sanhita itself, namely, of that of the White Yajurveda, and thus strengthens the proofs which may be alleged for the latter recension of this Veda. It runs as follows: "Whatever exists in this world is to be enveloped by (the thought of) God (the Ruler). By renouncing the world, thou shalt save (thy soul). Do not covet the riches of any one. Performing sacred works, let a man desire to live a hundred years. If thou thus (desirest), O man, there is no other manner in which thou art not tainted by work. To the godless worlds, covered with gloomy darkness, go all the people, when departing (from this world), who are slayers of their souls. He (the soul) does not move, is swifter than the mind; not the gods (the senses) did obtain him, he was gone before. Standing, he outstrips all the other (gods, senses), how fast they run. Within him the ruler of the atmosphere upholds the vital actions. He moves, he does not move; he is far and also near; he is within this all, he is out of this all. Whoever beholds all beings in the soul alone, and the soul in all beings, does hence not look down (on any creature). When a man knows that all beings are even the soul, when he beholds the unity (of the soul), then there is no delusion, no grief. He is all-pervading, brilliant, without body, invulnerable, without muscles, pure, untainted by sin, he is allwise, the Ruler of the mind, above all beings, and self-existent. He distributed according to their nature the things for everlasting years. Those who worship ignorance, enter into gloomy darkness, into still greater darkness those who are devoted to knowledge. They say, different is the effect of knowledge, different the effect of ignorance; thus we heard from the sages who explained (both) to us. Whoever knows both, knowledge and ignorance together, overcomes death by ignorance, and enjoys immortality by knowledge. Those who worship uncreated nature, enter into gloomy darkness, into still greater darkness those who are devoted to created nature. They say,

different is the effect from (worshipping) uncreated nature, different from (worshipping) created nature. This we heard from the sages who explained (both) to us. Whoever knows both, created nature and destruction together, overcomes death by destruction, and enjoys immortality by created nature. To me whose duty is truth, open, O Pushan, the entrance to the truth concealed by the brilliant disk, in order to behold (thee). O Pushan, Rishi thou alone, O dispenser of justice (Yama), O Sun, offspring of Prajapati, disperse thy rays (and) collect thy light; let me see thy most auspicious form; for the same soul which is in thee, am I. Let my vital spark obtain the immortal air; then let this body be consumed to ashes. OM, O my mind, remember, remember (thy) acts, O mind, remember, remember thy acts. Guide us, O Agni, by the road of bliss to enjoyment; (guide us), O God, who knowest all acts. Destroy our crooked sin, that we offer thee our best salutation."[82]

The principal Aranyakas and Upanishads connected with each of the four Vedas are the following: to the Rigveda belong the Aitareya Aranyaka and the Kaushitaki-Aranyaka, the third book of which is the Kaushitaki-Upanishad. The Upanishads of the Samaveda are the Chhandogya- and the Kena-Upanishad. To the Black Yajurveda belongs the Taittiriya-Aranyaka, the four last books of which contain two Upanishads, namely, the Taittiriya- and the Narayaniya-Upanishad; besides the Swetaswatara-, Maitrayana-, and Kathaka-Upanishad. That the Brihad- Aranyaka is attached to the Brahmana of the White Yajurveda, has been stated already.

The largest number of Upanishads, however, has grown up in connection with the Atharvaveda, which seems to have favoured more than the sacrificial Vedas the tendency for mystical reasoning. Among them we name especially the Mundaka-, Prasna-, Brahma-, and Mandukya-Upanishada, as treating of the nature of the

[82] Ib., vol. xv. p. 71.

divine and human soul. The Jabala-, Sannyasa-, Asrama-, and Hansa-Upanishads are some of those which describe the means by which deep meditation or the abstract union with the Supreme Soul can be obtained. A third class, as mentioned above, has a sectarian character, by identifying the Supreme Soul with Vishnu or Siva in their various forms; among those referring to Vishnu we notice the Narayana-, and the Nrishinha tapaniya-Upanishad; among those connected with the worship of Siva we find the Satarudriya-, Kaivalya-, Skanda-Upanishad, and one called Atharvasiras.[83]

While the Upanishads are the intermediate link between the Vedas and the later systems of Hindu philosophy, the VEDANGAS show us how scientific research grew up in India from the soil of the sacred texts. If we consider the bulk of literature which is comprised by the Sanhitas and Brahmanas, and the anxious desire which every Brahmanic believer must have felt to preserve it in its integrity, it is easily understood that in the course of time various means were devised for securing the correctness of the sacred texts, for guarding their senses against erroneous interpretations, and for maintaining in its purity a proper practice of the rites which were taught in the Brahmanas. This is the object of the Vedanga works. The Brahmanas of the Samaveda speak of six Vedangas or "limbs of the Veda," in other words, of six works or classes of works which were instrumental in maintaining the integrity of the Veda. But it is not certain whether this Brahmana means the same six Vedangas which have come down to us; Yaska, again, alludes to Vedangas but does not state that they were six. We must distinguish therefore between categories of works which were called Vedangas, and between certain works which

[83] For a fuller account of this class of works, see Weber's 'Akademische Vorlesungen uber Indische Literaturgeschichte,' and his 'Indische Studien.'

are the surviving representatives of these categories, but need not have been the first Vedanga works.

The doctrines comprised under this name are the following: SIKSHA CHHANDAS, VYAKARANA, NIRUKTA, JYOTISHA, and KALPA.

SIKSHA is the science of a proper pronunciation. One little treatise only is considered as representing this Vedanga,—the Siksha ascribed to the authorship of the great grammarian Panini. It consists in one recension of thirty-five, in another of fifty-nine verses, and treats of the nature of the letters, of the accents, and the proper mode of sounding them. A chapter of the Taitiriya-Aranyaka treats likewise of Siksha; but though it is possible that Panini's Siksha may not be the original Vedanga of this class, it is more than doubtful that this chapter of the Aranyaka was ever considered as such.[84]

CHHANDAS means "metre;" and the Vedanga which is quoted by this name is referred to the authorship of Pingalanaga. But as the work of the latter treats of Prakrit as well as of Sanskrit metres, it becomes doubtful again whether we possess in it an original Vedanga work.[85]

VYAKARANA signifies "grammar," but literally means "undoing," that is, analysis, for to the Hindu scholar grammar is linguistic analysis; his grammar *un-does* words and *un-does* sentences; it examines the component parts of a word, and therefore teaches the properties of a base and affix, and all the linguistic phenomena connected with both; it examines the relation, in sentences, of one word to another, and likewise unfolds all the linguistic phenomena which are inseparable from the meeting of words. The most renowned representatives of this

[84] Weber, 'Ueber das Pratijnasutra,' 1872; Haug, 'Ueber das Wesen und den Werth des wedischen Accents,' 1873, p. 53 ff.; Kielhorn, in 'the Indian Antiquary,' v. 141 ff., 193 ff.; and Weber, ibid. 253.

[85] Weber, 'Ind. Lit.' p. 66.

science is PANINI, who wrote a work in eight chapters, comprising thirty-two sections and three thousand nine hundred and nity-six rules, three or four of which, however, probably did not belong to him. And so great was the renown of this wonderful labour, which may be placed at the side of the best grammatical works of any nation and any age, that Panini was looked upon as a Rishi who had received it, by inspiration, from the God Siva himself. Panini, it is true, quotes in his work various grammarians who preceded him, but Vyakarana is typified by the grammar of Panini, which has remained, up to this day, the standard for Sanskrit speech. We may add, that his work was criticised and amplified by Katyayana, who in his turn was criticised by Patanjali, a grammarian who lived in the middle of the second century before Christ[86] and that these three grammarians are considered to be the greatest authorities in the science they taught. But Panini only can be held to be the representative of the Vedanga we are spaking of. Nor should the Vyakarna be confounded with a class of works which apparently stands in a closer relation than itself to the Veda-Sanhitas —with the Pratisakhya works; for though the latter are concerned in Vaidik language alone, whereas Panini's work is even more engaged in teaching the classical than the Vaidik dialect, their aim and their contents materially differ from those of the Vyakarana. Their object is merely the ready-made word, or base, in the condition in which it is fit to enter into a sentence or into composition with another base. They are nowise concerned in analysing or explaining the nature of a word or base; they take them such as they are, and teach the changes which they undergo when they become part of a spoken hymn. Whether there existed at one period other Pratisakhyas than those which have survived, it is not easy to say in the present condition of Sanskrit philology; but

[86] Weber, 'Indische Studien,' xiii. 297 ff. Kielhorn, 'Katyayana and Patanjali.' Bombay, 1876.

it has been proved that the present Pratisakhyas are even more recent than Panini's work.[87]

NIRUKTA, or "explanation," is represented by the NIRUKTA of YASKA, which is the oldest attempt, known to us, of an explanation of obscure passages of the Vaidik Sanhitas. "It is important, however," says Muller,[88] "not to confound Yaska's Nirukta with Yaska's Commentary on the Nirukta, although it has become usual, after the fashion of modern manuscripts, to call that commentary Nirukta, and to distinguish the text of the Nirukta by the name of Nighantû. The original Niruktas that formed an integral part of the Vedanga literature, known to Yaska himself, can have consisted only of lists of words arranged according to their meaning, like that upon which Yaska's commentary is based......Sayana gives the following account of this matter: 'Nirukta is a work where a number of words is given, without any intention to connect them in a sentence....The first part (of the Nirukta) is the NAIGHANTUKA, the second the NAIGAMA, and the third the DAIVATA....The word NIGHANTU applies to works where, for the most part, synonymous words are taught. Therefore the first part of this work also has been called Naighantuka, because synonymous words are taught there. In this part there are three lectures: in the first, we have words connected with things of time and space in this and the other worlds; in the second, we have words connected with men and human affairs; and in the third, words expressing qualities of the preceding objects, such as thinness, multitude, shortness, &c. NIGAMA means Veda. As Yaska has quoted many passages from the Veda, which he usually introduces by the words, "For this there is also a Nigama;" and as in the second part, consisting of the fourth Adhyaya, words are taught which

[87] Goldstucker, 'Panini,' p. 183, ff. Also M. Muller, 'Rigveda-Pratisakhya,' 1869. Introd.; Weber, 'Ind. Stud.' xiii. 3 ff., and 'Ind. Lit.' p. 24.

[88] Anc. Sansk. Lit. p. 154.

usually occur in the Veda only, this part is called Naigama. Why the third part, consisting of the fifth Adhyaya, is called DAIVATA, is clear. The whole work, consisting of five Adhyayas and three parts, is called Nirukta, because the meaning of words is given there irrespective of anything else. A commentary on this has been composed by Yaska, in twenty Adhyayas. This also is called Nirukta, becasue the real meaning conveyed by each word is fully given therein.' "

The fifth Vedanga is called JYOTISHA, or "astronomy.[89] Its object was to teach how to fix the proper time for the performance of sacrificial acts. It is a Vaidik calendar. There is but one manuscript work in the library of the India Office, which would seem to belong to this category, but it is difficult to say whether it may aspire to the proud name of a Vedanga work.

The sixth Vedanga, on the contrary, the KALPA, is represented by a great number of works, several of which are preserved in manuscripts in our libraries. KALPA means "ceremonial," and the works of this class are the code of the Brahmanic rites. It was stated before that the Brahmana portion of the Veda contains explanations of the purposes for which the verses of the Sanhitas were used, in consequence that it conveys a knowledge of the Vaidik rites. This knowledge, however, which apparently sufficed for the period at which these words were composed, must have been deemed insufficient at later ages, which required a more copious detail for a proper performance of the rites. Moreover, the Brahmana, as a first attempt, are wanting in proper arrangement of the matter they contain, and abound in legendary narratives, which interrupt their comment on the sacrificial acts. The Kalpa-Sutras remedy this practical defect; they contain a complete system of the Vaidik rites according to the Veda to which they belong. Of such Kalpa-Sutras, those con-

[89] Weber, 'Ueber den Vedakalender, namens Jyotisham,' 1862.

nected with the ceremonial of the Rigveda are, the Sutras of Sankhayana, Aswalayana, and Saunaka. Kalpa-Sutras explaining the rites of the Samaveda are those of Masaka, Latyayana, Gobhila, Drahyayana, and a Sutra called Anupadasutra, which explains the ceremonial taught in the Panchavinsa-Brahmana, Kalpa-Sutras of the Black Yajurveda are the Apastamba, Baudhayana, Satyashadha-Hiranyakesin, Manava, Bharadwaja, &c.,; of the White Yajurveda, that of Katyayana: of the Atharva-veda, that of Kusika.

Two other classes of Sutras gradually completed the code of these Kalpa words, which, in being founded on Sruti or the Veda, bear also the name of SRAUTA-SUTRA, namely, the GRIHYA- and the SAMAYACHARIKA-SUTRAS. The Grihya-Sutra describe the domestic ceremonies, as distinct from the great sacrificial acts enjoined by the Srauta or Kalpa works: "First, the marriage ceremonies; then the ceremonies which are performed at the conception of a child, at various periods before his birth, at the time of his birth, the ceremony of naming the child, of carrying him out to see the sun, of feeding him, of cutting his hair, and, lastly, of investing him as a student and sending him to a Guru, under whose care he is to study the sacred writings. . . . It is only after he has served his apprenticeship and grown up to manhood that he is allowed to marry, to light the sacrificial fire for himself, to choose his priests, and to perform year after year the solemn sacrifices prescribed by Smriti and Sruti. The latter are described in the latter books of the Grihya-Sutras; and the last book contains a full account of the funeral ceremonies and of the services offered to the spirits of the departed."[90]

The Samayacharika-Sutras regulate the relations of every-day life. "It is chiefly in them that we have to look to the originals of the metrical law-books, such as

[90] Muller, 'Anc. Sans. Lit.' p. 204.

Manu, Yujnavalkya, and the rest."[91] Both these Sutras are comprised under the name of SMARTA-SUTRA (from SMRITI, "tradition"), as they are based on it. Of the Grihya-Sutras of the Rigveda, we possess those of Sankhyayana and Aswalayana; a Grihya-Sutra of the Samaveda is that of Gobhila; the Yajurveda in both its recensions seem to have had many Sutras of this kind. Of the Black Yajurveda, we name especially the Baudhayana; and of the White Yajurveda, the Paraskara Grihya-Sutra.

We conclude these outlines of the principal works of the Vaidic literature with mentioning another class of compositions which arose from the desire of securing the integrity of the Vaidik texts, as well as the traditional and exegetic material connected with them—the ANUKRAMANI, or Indices to various portions of this literature. The completest of this kind is that by Katyayana, to the Rigveda-Sanhita. It gives the first words of each hymn, the number of verses, the name and family of the poets, the names of the deities, and the metres of every verse. Its name is SARVANUKRAMANI,—that is, "the index of all things" and it seems to have improved on four similar writings which preceded it and are ascribed to Saunaka. For the Yajurveda there are mentioned three Anukramani, for the Samaveda two, and there is one for the Atharveda.[92]

It would be but natural to ask, what date could be assigned to all or any of the various works which have been named in the course of this brief sketch of Vaidik literature; but Sanskrit philology is as yet not able to answer this question satisfactorily. It may affer conjectural dates according to the impressions of the individual mind, but it is bound to avow that past research has not provided it with facts which would impart to its chronological surmises any degree of plausibility.

[91] Ibid., p. 200.

[92] Muller, 'Anc. Sansk. Lit.' p. 215, ff.

VEDIC LITERATURE

VEDA (from the Sanskrit VID, know; kindred with the Latin VID-, Greek ID-, Gothic VAIT-, Lithuanian WEIZD-; hence, literally, knowledge) is the technical name of those ancient Sanskrit works on which the first period of the religious belief of the Hindus is based. The oldest of these works—and in all probability the oldest literary document still existing—is the RIGVEDA; next to it stand the YAJURVEDA and SAMAVEDA; and the latest is the ATHARVAVEDA. The first three also bear the collective title of TRAYI, or "the three-fold" (scil. science); and all four are considered to be of divinely inspired origin. Each of these Vedas consists of two distinct divisions—a SANHITA, or collection of MANTRAS, or hymns; and a portion called BRAHMANA. A MANTRA (from MAN, think; hence, literally, the means by which thinking or meditation is effected) is, as Colebrooke, in conformity with the Mimansa writers, defines the word, a prayer, or else a thanksgiving, praise, or adoration addressed to a deity: it declares the purpose of a pious act, or lauds or invokes the object; it asks a question, or returns an answer; either directs, inquires, or deliberates, blesses or imprecates, exults or laments, counts or narrates, &c. Sometimes it is addressed to the deity with a verb in the first person; sometimes it ends with the verb "thou art," or with the word "thee."[1] If such a MANTRA is metrical, and intended for loud recitation, it is called RICH (from RICH, praise —whence the name RIGVEDA, *i.e.*, the Veda containing such praises)—if it is in prose, and then it must be muttered inaudibly, it is called YAJUS (from YAJ, sacrifice;

[1] See Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, i. p. 308; Muller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 343; Jaiminiyanyayamalavistara, as quoted in Goldstucker's *Panini*, p. 69.

hence, literally, the means by which sacrificing is effected); therefore, YAJURVEDA signifies the VEDA containing such YAJUS. And if it is metrical, and intended for chanting, is is termed SAMAN; whence SAMAVEDA means the Veda containing such samans. (The original meaning of the latter word is obscure. Indian grammarians derive it, but without much probability, from *so*, to give pain, because, they say, "it is difficult to utter such mantras." A mystical, but grammatically impossible, account of SAMAN is given in the SATAPATHA-BRAHMANA and BRIHADARANYAKA, where the word is analysed into SA and AMA, the former being interpreted as implying "speech," and the latter, "breathing forth," since the chanting of the saman, as the commentator says, is essentially the result of both.)—No special name is given to the mantras of the fourth Veda. The author of the mantra, or, as the Hindus would say, the inspired "seer," who received it from the deity, is termed its RISHI; and the object in which the mantra is concerned is its DEVATA—a word which generally signifies "deity," but the meaning of which, in its reference to the mantras, must not always be taken, literally, as there are hymns, in which not gods or deified beings, but, for instance, a sacrificial post, a remedy against bad dreams, the generosity of princes from whom gifts were received by the authors, or a chariot, a drum, weapons., the charioteer and horses employed in war, and other worldly objects, invoked, are considered as the DEVATA[2]—designates, according to MADHAVA-SAYANA,

[2] See Colebrooke's *Misc. Essays*, i., p. 22; Wilson's *Rigveda*, vol. i., in the edition of F. E. Hall, p. 347.—*Brahmana*—derived from *brahman*, neuter, probably in the sense of prayer or hymn (see concerning this word, J. Muir, "On the Relation of the Priests to the other Classes of Indian Society in the Vedic Age," in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1864; and the introduction of M. Haug's edition of the Aitareya Brahmana, vol. i., p. 4.

the great commentator on the Vedas, that portion, in prose, of the Vedas which contains either commandments or explanations; or, in other words, which gives injunctions for the performance of sacrificial acts, explains their origin, and the occasions on which the mantras had to be used, by adding sometimes illustrations and legends, and sometimes also mystical and philosophical speculations. The BRAHMANA portion of the Vedas is therefore the basis on which the Vedic ritual rests and whence the UPANISHADS and the philosophical doctrines took their development.*

Though MANTRAS and BRAHMANAS—both of which are also termed SRUTI—were held at a later period of Hinduism to have existed simultaneously, that is, from eternity, it is certain that the Brahmana portion of each Veda is posterior to at least some part of its Sanhita, for it refers to it; and it scarcely requires a remark that so great a bulk of works as that represented by both portions must have been the gradual result of a considerable period of time. There is, indeed, sufficient evidence to prove that various conditions of society, various phases of religious belief, and even different periods of language, are reflected by them. The difficulty, however, critically to discern these periods, is enhanced by the losses, probably considerable, which these writings suffered before they were preserved in the shape in which we now possess them. For in tradition, which records that VYASA, after having compiled and arranged the Vedas, handed each of them to four disciples, and that these disciples taught them to their disciples, and so forth, down to distant ages, there is so much indubitable, that Mantras and Brahmanas had to pass through a large number of Sakhas, or schools, and that the discrepancies which gradually arose between these schools, both as regards the Vedic texts and the interpretation of these texts, cannot have been slight; for,

*Also Brahma und die Brahmanen, p. 27 f. Weber, Ind. Literaturgeschichte, p. 12 ff.

apart from the conclusion yielded by a comparisson of the remaining texts of some of these schools, later writers afford us an insight into the animosity which existed between these schools, and must have arisen from very material grounds. Thus, in a commentary on PARASKARA'S GRIHYA SUTRAS, it is said: "Vasishtha declares that it is wrong to follow the rules of another Sakha. He says: "A wise person will certainly not perform the duties prescribed by another Sakha: he that does is called a traitor to his Sakha. Whosoever leaves the law of his Sakha, and adopts that of another, he sinks into blind darkness, having degraded a sacred Rishi." And in another law-book it is said: "If a man gives up his own customs, and performs others, whether out of ignorance or covetousness, he will fall, and be destroyed." And again in the PARISISHTA of the CHHANDOGYAS: "A fool who ceases to follow his own Sakha, wishing to adopt another one, his work will be in vain."[3] That each SAKHA claimed the possession of the only true and genuine Veda, may be already inferred from passages like these. The differences between these Sakhas, however, did not consist—as has been believed—in their various readings of the Sruti alone; it also consisted in considerable variations of their arrangement of the scriptures; in their additions or omissions of texts—as may be seen from still existing Sakhas of the Yajurveda—and, as is stated by MADHUSUDANA, and results from a commentator on Panini, in their *different interpretation of the Vedic texts.* How great the number of these Sakhas was, may be inferred from the statement of the CHARANAVYUHA, a treatise ascribed to an ancient writer, Saunaka: for it enumerates five Sakhas of the Rig-veda; says that there were 86, and names 42 (or in one recension 44), of the Yajurveda; mentions twelve of the Samaveda, out of a thousand which, it says, were at one time in existence, and nine of the Atharvaveda.[4] The

[3] See Muller's *Ancient Sanskrit Literature,* p. 51.

[4] A. Weber, Indische Studien, xiii., 430 ff.

ATHARVANARAHASYA, a modern treatise on the Atharvaveda, while ascribing the same number of Sakhas to the Samaveda and Atharvaveda, speaks of twenty-one of the Rigveda, and a hundred of the Yajurveda. Of all these schools, however, the RIGVEDA is now extant only in one; the YAJURVEDA (both divisions, to be named hereafter, taken collectively) in three, and partially, in four; the SAMAVEDA in perhaps two; and the ATHARVAVEDA in one.[5]

The character of the Sanhita or Mantra portion of the four Vedas—on which their Brahmana portion is based—as well as the relation in which these Sanhitas stand to each other, is intelligible only if it is borne in mind that the ancient Hindu believed to secure the favours of his gods chiefly by the performance of sacrificial rites; that gradually these rites became complicated and manifold, and that special care, therefore, had to be taken to provide for a correct celebration of the sacrifices which had sprung up, and also to guard against the evil consequences which might result from inadvertence, or other causes beyond the sacrificer's control. The original worship seems to have been simple enough—it probably neither occupied much time, nor required the assistance of a priest. But when sacrifices were instituted which lasted from one day to eleven, nay, to a hundred days—and some works speak of sacrifices which went on for the space of one and even several years—and when the Brahmanic caste found the performance of such sacrifices to be an excellent means of establishing its sway over the other castes and a convenient source of an easy livelihood, it was laid down as a rule that no sacrifice could be performed without one RITWIJ, or priest; and that a great sacrifice, such as the Jyotishtoma, Rajasuya, or other sacrifices which could only be celebrated by wealthy people or kings, required the assistance of not less than sixteen priests, besides a number of menials, who had to slay the

[5] On another recension see R. Roth, "Der Atharvaveda in Kaschmir." Tubingen, 1875.

sacrificial animals, to chant, or to perform other inferior work. These sixteen priests were then divided into four sections, each headed by one Ritwij, and containing, besides him, his three purushas, or assistants. The first section consisted of the ADHWARYU, with his three purushas, the Pratiprasthatri, Neshtri, and Unnetri; the second, of the BRAHMAN, with the three purushas, Brahmanachchhansin, Agnidh (or Agnidhra), and Potri; the third, of the UDGATRI, with the Prastotri, Pratihartri, and Subrahmanya; and the fourth of the HOTRI, whose assistants were the Maitravaruna, Achchhavaka, and Gravastut.[6] The principal duties of these prists were further regulated in the following manner. The HOTRI had to perform the rites relating to the Rigveda, the ADHWARYU those based on the Yajurveda; the UDGATRI was concerned in the rites of the Samaveda; and the BRAHMAN had to possess a knowledge of all these three Vedas, and to set right any mistake that might have occurred in the performance of the ritual acts, or remedy any defect which might vitiate the efficiency of the sacrifice. He was, therefore, the most learned of all the priests; and the Rigveda itself, though perhaps in one of its latest portions, recognises this superiority of the priest Brahman. In the ritual works relating to the first three Vedas, no functions based on the use of the latest or the Atharvaveda are assigned to him, but in the SAUNAKA-BRAHMANA of the ATHARVAVEDA, where Prajapati is introduced as intending to perform a Soma sacrifice, and asking the Vedas whom he should choose for his Hotri, Adhwaryu, Udgatri, and Brahman, the Vedas answer him: "Choose for a Hotri (the priest) who knows the Rigveda; for an Adhwaryu (the priest), who knows the Yajurveda; for an Udgatri (the priest), who knows the Samaveda; and for a Brahman (the priest),

[6] In other accounts, the order of these sections varies, and in the section headed by the Brahman, the Potri precedes the Agnidh; see also Muller, *Ancient Sanskrit Lit.*, pp. 450, 468, 469.

who knows the Atharvaveda;" and to explain the reason for such advice, they add that the Rigveda hymns having the earth for their abode, one who chooses a HOTRI will obtain dominion over the earth; the Yajurveda mantras resting on the intermediate space, one who engages an ADHWARYU will obtain the world of that space; the Samaveda hymns dwelling on heaven, one who employs an UDGATRI will obtain that world; but one who chooses a BRAHMAN will encompass the world of (the neuter) Brahman, or the supreme spirit since the hymns of the Atharvaveda have for their abode Brahman.

The most interesting feature of this and similar passages is the tendency of their authors to maintain the greater efficiency of one of the later Vedas in comparison to that of the Rigveda, and consequently the greater practical superiority of these Vedas over the avowedly oldest Veda. And this is intelligible enough, if we compare the contents of these Vedas.

The worship alluded to in many hymns of the Rigveda must have consisted more of isolated sacrificial offerings than of a series of acts strung together so as to form an elaborate sacrifice. There are other hymns, it is true, which betray the existence, at their time, of a ritual, already become complicated, as when three or four, or even seven priests are mentioned by the poet; but though these hymns, as well as the former, bear testimony to the existence, at that early period, of ritual acts, it does not follow that the Rigveda, as such, was composed for the purpose of being recited when they were performed. From the nature of its hymns, it results, on the contrary, that, having been composed, they were at some subsequent period connected with those pious acts which became more and more complicated, and gradually were systematized. But then even there remain verses which would not easily bend to such artificial purposes; and whole hymns, too, which would resist an attempt to force them into a liturgic code for which they were not intended by the poet's mind. A collection of songs, in

short, which was the natural growth of time, and, to some extent, at least, the ingenuous outburst of the poet's feelings, became inadequate for a regular liturgy of a highly-developed and throughout artificial ritual. Out of this necessity there arose the SAMA- and the YAJURVEDA. The former was entirely made up of extracts from the Rigveda, put together so as to suit the ritual of the so-called Soma sacrifices. For, as all Indian authorities agree in stating that the Samaveda contains none but Rigveda verses, the absence of seventy-one verses in the recension of this Veda, edited by Benfey, from the recension in which the Rigveda now exists, does not disprove their unanimous statement: it must be accounted for by the circumstance, that these verses belonged to one or the other of the recensions of the Rigveda, which, as mentioned before, are no longer preserved. The origin of the Yajurveda is similar to that of the Samaveda; it, too, is chiefly composed of verses taken from the Rigveda; but as the sphere of the ritual for which the compilation of this Veda became necessary is wider than that of the Samaveda, and as the poetry of the Rigveda no longer sufficed for certain sacrifices with which this ritual had been enlarged, new mantras were added to it—the so-called Yajus, in prose, which thus became a distinctive feature of this Veda; and it is on the Yajurveda, therefore, that the orthodox Hindu looked with especial predilection, for it could better satisfy his sacrificial wants than the Sama-, and still more, of course than the Rigveda. "The Yajurveda," says SAYANA, in his introduction to the Taittiriya Sanhita, "is like a wall, the two other Vedas like paintings (on it.)" The sacredness of the Sama- and Yajurvedas, and the belief in their inspired character, rest on the assnmption that they are of the same origin as the Rigveda, which dates from eternity, and which was "seen" by the Rishis who uttered it. That, in the case of the Yajurveda, this theory is only partially correct, results already from the description just given of it; for whatever losses the present text of the Rigveda may have suffered, it is admitted by all authorities that is mantras were always

metrical, and that it can never, therefore, have possessed passages in prose. But how frail this theory is, and in what sense it is possible to speak of the sameness of origin, even in the case of those hymns of the Sama- and Yajurveda which are composed of Rigveda verses, a comparison of the place occupied by the verses of a few hymns taken from one and the other of these Vedas with the place which the same verses occupy in the Rigveda will sufficiently show.

The first hymn of the Samaveda consists of ten verses, nine of which are contained in the present recension of the Rigveda. If by the side of each of these verses the place is marked which it holds in the Rigveda, the result is this:

	Book.	Hymn.	Verse.
Samaveda 1, verse 1, is Rigveda,	6	16	10
" " 2, "	6	16	1
" " 3, "	1	12	1
" " 4, "	6	16	34
" " 5, "	8	73	11
" " 6, "	8	60	1
" " 7, "	6	16	16
" " 8, "	8	11	7
" " 9, "	6	16	13

The verses of which the hymn of the Samaveda 1, verses 370—380, is composed, correspond with the following verses of the Rigveda:

	Book.	Hymn.	Verse.
Samaveda I, verse 370, with Rigveda	8	86	10
" " 371, "	10	147	1
" " 372, "		absent	
" " 373, "	1	57	4
" " 374, "	3	51	4
" " 375, "	10	43	1
" " 376, "	1	51	1
" " 377, "	1	52	1
" " 378, "	6	70	1
" " 379, "	10	134	1
" " 380, "	1	101	1

If from the White Yajurveda the mantras, for instance, of the 22nd to the 25th chapter were submitted to a similar test, it would be seen that in chapter 22, which has 34 divisions, only four verses occur in the Rigveda, viz.:

	Book.	Hymn.	Verse.
White Yajurveda 22. verse 10, in Rigveda	1	22	5
,, ,, 15, ,,	5	14	1
,, ,, 16, ,,	3	11	2
,, ,, 18, ,,	9	110	3

that in chapter 23, with 65 divisions, there correspond:

	Book.	Hymn.	Verse.
White Yajurveda 23, verse 3, with Rigveda	10	121	3
,, ,, 5, ,,	1	6	1
,, ,, 6, ,,	1	6	2
,, ,, 16, ,,	1	162	21
,, ,, 32, ,,	4	39	6

that chapter 24 being in prose, cannot occur in the Rigveda; and that of chapter 25, with 47 divisions:

	Book.	Hymn.	Verse.
White Yajurveda 25, verse 12, is Rigveda	10	121	4
,, ,, 13, ,,	10	121	2
,, ,, 14-23, are ,,		89	1-10
,, ,, 24-45, ,,	1	162	1-22
,, ,, 46, is ,,	10	157	1, 3, 2

All, therefore, that is left of these oldest Veda in the Samaveda and Yajurveda, is a Rigveda piecemeal; its hymns scattered about; verses of the same hymn transposed; verses from different hymns combined, and even the compositions of different poets brought into one and the same hymn, as if they belonged to the same authorship. That, under such treatment, the Yajurveda should have lost all poetical worth, is but what may be expected;

it must be, however, matter of surprise that the Samaveda should have saved so much, as it even now possesses, of that genuine beauty which distinguishes the Rigveda poetry. The ATHARVAVEDA, too, is made up in a similar manner as the Yajurveda, with this difference only, that the additions in it to the garbled extracts from the Rigveda are more considerable than those in the Yajurveda. It is avowedly the latest Veda, and even its name, "Atharvaveda," as it was current already during the classical period of Sanscrit literature, does not yet occur in the oldest Upanishads, where only the songs and revelations of the ATHARVA-ANGIRAS or of the BHRIGU-ANGIRAS, apparently denoting this Veda, are spoken of. The Atharvaveda was not used, as Madhusudana, in his treaties on Sanskrit Literature, says, "for the sacrifice, but merely for appeasing evil influences, for insuring the success of sacrificial acts, for incantations, &c.;" but on this very ground, and perhaps on account of the mysteriousness which pervades its songs, it obtained, amongst certain schools, a degree of sanctity which even surpassed that of the older Vedas.

This being the general character of these four Vedas, a few remarks must here suffice to convey some idea of their special contents. The social condition of the Hindus, as reflected from the hymns of this Veda, is not that of a pastoral or nomadic people, as is sometimes supposed, but, on the contrary, betrays an advanced stage of civilisation. Frequent allusion is made in them to towns and cities, to mighty kings, and their prodigious wealth. Besides agriculture, they mention various useful arts which were practised by the people, as the art of weaving, of melting precious metals, of fabricating cars, golden and iron mail, and golden ornaments. The employment of the needle and the use of musical instruments, are known to them. They also prove that the Hindus of that period were not only familiar with the ocean, but sometimes must have engaged in naval expeditions. They had some knowledge of medicine, and must have made some advance in astronomical computation, as mention is made of the

adoption of an intercalary month, for the purpose of adjusting the solar and lunar years. Nor were they unacquainted with the vices of civilisation, for we read in these hymns of common women, of secret births, of gamblers and thieves. There is also a curious hymn, from which it would follow that even the complicated law of inheritance, which is one of the peculiarities of the existing Hindu law, was to some extent already in use at one of the periods of the Rigveda hymns. The institution of caste, however, seems at that time to have been unknown, for there is no evidence to prove that the names which at a later period were current for the distinction of caste, were employed in the same sense by the poets of these hymns.[7]

The only recension in which the Sanhita of the Rigveda has been preserved to us, is that of the SAKALA school; and the hymns themselves are arranged according to two methods, the one chiefly considering the material bulk, the other the authorship of the hymns. Both divisions, however, run parallel. According to the former, the whole Sanhita consists of eight ASHTAKAS, or eights; these, again, are divided into 64 ADHYAYAS, or lessons; these into 2,006 VARGAS, or sections; and the Vargas into RICHS, or verses, the actual number of which is 10,417, but, according to the statement of Indian authorities, seems at some other time to have amounted to 10,616 or 10,622. According to the other method, the Sanhita is divided into ten MANDALAS, or "circles;" the Mandalas into 85 ANUVAKAS, or "sections;" these into 1,017, and 11 additional, i.e., into 1028 SUKTAS, or "hymns," and the hymns into RICHS, or verses, the number of which coincides, of course, with that of the former arrangement. The number of PADAS, or words, in this Sanhita is stated as being 153,826.

In eight out of the ten Mandalas, the first hymn or

[7] See Wilson's *Rigveda*, vol. i., re-edited by F. E. Hall, vols. ii. iii.; and vol. iv., edited by E. B. Cowell (Lond. 1850—1866).

hymns are addressed to AGNI; the next hymn or hymns generally to INDRA; and after these come hymns to the VISWE DEVAS—the deities collectively—or hymns to other special deities. The eighth Mandala begins with hymns to Indra, and the ninth is chiefly devoted to Soma.

As for the authorship of the hymns the second Mandala belongs chiefly to that of GRITSAMADA, the third chiefly to that of VISWAMITRA, and the fourth chiefly to that of VAMADEVA. The fifth was composed chiefly by ATRI and members of his family: the sixth by BHARADVAJA and members of his family; the seventh by VASISTHA and his kin; the first, eighth, ninth, and tenth by various Rishis.[8]

The Brahmana portion of the Rigveda is preserved in two works only—the AITAREYA BRAHMANA, which consists of eight PANCHIKAS, or "pentades," each of these comprising five ADHYAYAS, or "lessons," and all the Adhyayas together, 285 KHANDAS, or "portions;" and the SANKHAYANA, or KAUSHITAKI-BRAHMANA, containing thirty ADHYAYAS, also sub-divided into a number of KHANDAS. The following specimens, selected from the former, may illustrate the manner in which works of this category enjoin sacrificial rites and explain their secret meaning. The

[8] The text of the Sanhita has been edited in Roman characters by Th. Aufrecht (Berlin, 1861) Second edition, Berlin, 1877, 2 vols. and the text with the commentary of Sayana, is published by Max Muller. Also the (Samhita and Pada) text separately, London, 1873, 2 vols. New edition, London, 1877. Of translations, that by H. H. Wilson, which was left by him completed in manuscript, and of which 4 volumes have appeared in print, follows the commentary of Sayana, based on Hindu tradition; that begun by Benfey in the Journal ORIENT UND OCCIDENT, vols. i. and ii. (Gott. 1862—1864), is essentialy speculative. The first volume of an annotated translation by M. Muller, containing twelve hymns, appeared in 1869. Two independent German translations, by Grassmann and Ludwig, have also appeared.

first relates to the ceremony of carrying the Soma. "The king Soma lived among the Gandharvas. The gods and Rishis deliberated as to how the king might be induced to return to them. VACH, the goddess of speech, said: 'The Gandharvas lust after women. I (therefore) shall transform myself into a woman, and then you sell me to them (in exchange for Soma).' The gods answered: 'No! how shall we live without thee?' She said: 'Sell me unto them; if you want me, I shall return to you.' Thus they did. In the disguise of a big naked woman, she was sold (by the gods to the Gandharvas) in exchange for Soma. In imitation (of this precedent), men drive away an immaculate cow of one year's age, this being the price at which they purchase the king Soma. This cow may, however, be rebought; for VACH returned to the gods. Hence the Mantras, after Soma has been bought, are to be repeated with a low voice. After Soma has been bought, the goddess of speech is with the Gandharvas; but she returns as soon as the ceremony of carrying the sacred fire is performed."

The following are the speculations of this Brahmana on the YUPA, or sacrificial post, and the meaning of the sacrificial animal.

"(The theologians) argue the question: Is the YUPA to remain standing (before the fire); or is it to be thrown (into the fire)? (They answer:) For him who desires cattle, it may remain standing. (About this, the following legend is reported.) Once upon a time, cattle did not stand still to be taken by the gods for food. After having run away, the cattle stood still, and, turning towards the gods, said repeatedly: 'You shall not obtain us. No, no!' Thereupon the gods saw that YUPA weapon which they erected. Thus they frightened the animals, which then returned to them. That is the reason that, up to this day, the sacrificial animals are turned towards the YUPA (their head being bent towards the sacrificial post to which they are tied). Then they stood still to be taken by the gods for their food. . . . The man who is ini-

tiated (into the sacrificial mysteries) offers himself to all deities. Agni represents all deities, and Soma represents all deities. When the sacrificer offers the animal to Agni and Soma, he releases himself from being offered to all deities. Some say: 'The animal to be offered to Agni and Soma must be of two colours, because it belongs to two deities.' But this precept should not be attended to. A fat animal is to be sacrificed, because animals (compared to the sacrificer) are fat, and he (compared to them) is lean. When the animal is fat, the sacrificer thrives through its marrow. Some say: 'Do not eat of the animal offered to Agni and Soma. Who eats of this animal, eats human flesh, because the sacrificer releases himself (from being sacrificed) by means of the animal."' But this precept, too, should not be attended to. The animal offered to Agni and Soma was an offering to Indra, for Indra slew Vritra through Agni and Soma. Both then said to him: "Thou hast slain Vritra through us; let us choose a boon from thee." "Choose yourselves," answered he. But they choose this boon from him; and thus they receive (now as their food) the animal which is sacrificed the day previous to the Soma feast. This is their everlasting portion chosen by them; hence one ought to take pieces of it, and eat them."[9]

The principal object for which the SAMAVEDA was compiled is the performance of those sacrifices of which the juice of the Soma plant is the chief ingredient; and of such sacrifices the most important is the JYOTISHTOMA, which consists of seven stages: the Agnishtoma, Atyagnishtoma, Ukthya, Shodasin, Atiratra, Aptoryama, and Vajapeya; but the performance of the Agnishtoma alone was considered obligatory for those who wished to derive the chief advantage accruing from the celebration of this grand ceremony; while its other six stages, while adding to the merits of the sacrificer, were deemed voluntary.

[9] See Haug's edition and translation of the *Aitareya Brahmana*, vol. ii. pp. 59, 78, Bombay, 1863.

At the performance of such Soma sacrifices, the verses of the Samaveda were intoned; and there are special song-books which teach the proper manner how to chant them. The Sanhita of the Samaveda is preserved in two recensions: in that of the RANAYANIYA, and probably also the KAUTHUMA school. It consists of two parts: the first CHHANDOGRANTHA, also called ARCHIKA, or PURVARCHIKA, contains, in the present recension, 585 verses which are arranged into 59 DASATI or decades, these being divided into PRAPATHAKAS, or chapters, and the latter, again, into ARDHAPRAPATHAKAS, or half-chapters. The second portion, called STAUBHIKA, or UTTARAGRANTHA, or UTTARARCHIKA, consists of 1225 verses, distributed over nine PRAPATHAKAS, which, too, are sub-divided into ARDHAPRAPATHAKAS. And there is this peculiarity in the Uttaragrantha, that being for the most part arranged according to triplets of verses, the first verse of these triplets is frequently one which also occurs in the Archika portion. It is then called the YONI, or parent verse, because the subsequent two, the UTTARA, are symbolically its children, since they participate of all the modulations, stoppages, and other modifications which may occur in the chanting of the "parent" verse. These modulations, &c., are taught in the GANAS, or song-books mentioned before, two of which, the VEYAGANA and ARANYAGANA, relate to the Archika; and two others, the UHAGANA and UHYAGANA, to the Stubhika part.[10]

The number of BRAHMANAS relating to this Veda is, by the Indian authorities, given as eight; and their names are: the PRAUDHA-, or PANCHAVINSA-, the SHADVINSA-, the SAMAVIDHI-, or SAMAVIDHANA-, the ARSHEYA-, the DEVATADHYAYA-, the VANSA-, the SANHITOPANISHAD-BRAHMANA; and the UPANISHAD, which probably is the CHHANDOGYA-

[10] The text of the Samaveda-Sanhita, in the Ranayaniya recension, has been edited and translated by J. Stevenson (Lond. 1842—1843), and by Th. Benfey (Leip. 1848).

UPANISHAD, and thus is ranked amongst the Brahmanas. A later Brahmana, probably of modern date, and which is not mentioned by Sayana, is the ADBHUTA-BRAHMANA.[11]

The history of the Yajurveda differs in so far from that of the other Vedas, as it is marked by a dissension between its own schools far more important than the differences which separated the schools of each other Veda. It is known by the distinction between a Yajurveda, called the BLACK, and another, called the WHITE YAJURVEDA. Tradition, especially that of the Puranas, records a legend to account for it. VAISAMPAYANA, it says, the disciple of Vyasa, who had received from him the Yajurveda, once having committed an offence, desired his disciples to assist him in the performing of some expiatory act. One of these, however, YAJNAVALKYA, proposed that he should alone perform the whole rite; upon which, Vaisampayana, enraged at what he considered to be the arrogance of Yajnavalkya, uttered a curse on him, the effect of which was, that Yajnavalkya disgorged all the Yajus texts he had learned from Vaisampayana. The other disciples, having meanwhile been transformed into partridges (TITTIRI), picked up these tainted texts, and retained them. Hence these texts are called TAITTIRIYAS. But Yajnavalkya, desirous of obtaining other Yajus texts, devoutly prayed to the Sun, and had granted to him his wish—"to possess such texts as were not known to his teacher." And because the Sun on that occasion appeared to Yajnavalkya in the shape of a horse (VAJA), those who studied these texts were called VAJINS. That part of this legend was invented merely to account for the name of the TAITTIRIYAS, after whom a Sanhita and Brahmana of

[11] The latter and the *Vansa Brahmana* have been edited by A. Weber: the former in the *Indische Studien*, vol. iv. (Berlin, 1858): the latter in the *Abhandlungen der koniglichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1858). Editions of nearly all of the Brahmanas, by A. Burnell, have also been published.

the Black Yajurveda, and for that of the VAJASANEYINS, after whom the Sanhita of the White Yajurveda is named, is clear enough. Nor is greater faith to be placed on it when it implies that the origin of this dissension ascended to the very oldest period of the Yajurveda; for there is strong reason to assume that the division took place even after the time of the grammarian Panini.[12] But so much in it is consistent with truth—that the Black Yajurveda is the older of the two; that the White Yajurveda contains texts which are not in the Black; and that, compared to the motley character of the former, it looks "white," or orderly. This motley character of the Black Yajurveda, however, arises from the circumstance, that the distinction between a Mantra and Brahmana portion is not so clearly established in it as in the other Vedas; hymns and matter properly belonging to the Brahmanas there being intermixed. This defect is remedied in the White Yajurveda; and it points, therefore, to a period when the material of the old Yajus was brought into a system consonant with prevalent theories, literary and ritual.

The contents of both divisions of the Yajurveda are similar in many respects. Two of the principal sacrifices of which they treat are the DARSAPURNAMASA, or the sacrifice to be performed at new and full moon, and the ASWAMEDHA, or the horse-sacrifice, at the performance of which 609 animals of various descriptions, domestic and wild, were tied to 21 sacrificial posts. A PURUSHAMEDHA, or man-sacrifice, unknown to the other Vedas, is also mentioned in it; its character, however, is symbolical.

The text of the Black Yajurveda is extant in the recension of two schools—that of APASTAMBA, to which the TAITTIRIYA SANHITA belongs, and that of CHARAKA.[13] The former consists of seven KANDA, or books, which

[12] See Goldstucker's *Panini*, p. 130, ff.

[13] Already published, with the commentary of Madhavacharya (Sayana), by E. Roer and E. B.. Cowell in the *Bibliotheca Indica* (Calcutta, 1860—1864).

comprise 44 PRAPATHAKA, or chapters, subdivided into 651 ANUVAKA, or sections, and containing 2198 KANDIKAS, or portions.

The VAJASANEYI-SANHITA, or the Sanhita of the White Yajurveda, exists in the recension of the MADHYANDINA and KANVA school. In the former[14]—this Sanhita has 40 ADHYAYAS, or books, subdivided into 303 ANUVAKAS, with 1975 KANDIKAS.

The principal Brahmana of the Black Yajurveda is the TAITTIRIYA-BRAHMANA.[15] That of the White Yajurveda is the SATAPATHA-BRAHMANA, the most complete and systematic of all Brahmanas.[16]

The Atharvaveda has no circle of sacrifices assigned to it. Its object is, as observed before, to teach how to appease, to bless, to curse, &c. "The most prominent characteristic feature of this Veda," Professor Whitney, one of its editors, remarks, "is the multitude of incantations which it contains; these are pronounced either by the person who is himself to be benefitted, or, more often, by the sorcerer for him, and are directed to the procuring of the greatest variety of desirable ends. Most frequently, perhaps, long life, or recovery from grievous sickness, is the object sought; then a talisman, such as a necklace, is sometimes given, or, in very numerous cases, some plant endowed with marvellous virtues is to be the immediate external means of the cure; further, the

[14] The text of which, apparently also with the commentary of *Mahidhara*, has been edited by by A. Weber, Berlin, 1852. The text, in Roman characters, has also been edited by Weber, in his "Indische Studien," vols. xii, and xiii. Another edition, with Mahidhara's commentary and a Bengali translation, has also been published from Calcutta.

[15] Ed. by Rajendralala Mitra and appeared in print (Calcutta, 1860—1865) in the *Bibliotheca Indica.*

[16] Its text, with a semblance of the commentary of *Sayana*, has been edited by A. Weber (Berlin, 1855).

attainment of wealth or power is aimed at, the downfall of enemies, increase in love or in play, the removal of petty pests, and so on, even down to the growth of hair on a bald pate."[17] It has been surmised[18] that the hymns of the Atharvaveda "formed an additional part of the sacrifice from a very early time, and that they were chiefly intended to counteract the influence of any untoward event that might happen during the sacrifice." This is possible; but the great importance which the adherents of this Veda themselves attach to it, is founded on other considerations than these. They argue, as appears from the treatise ATHARVANARAHASYA, mentioned above, that the three other Vedas enable a man to fulfil the DHARMA, or religious law, but that the Atharva helps him to attain MOKSHA, or eternal bliss. This doctrine is laid down, for instance, in the CHULIKA UPANISHAD of this Veda, when it says: "Those Brahmans and others who know the science of the (neuter) Brahman contained in the BRAHMAVEDA, become merged in Brahman;" and it is likewise inferred from other passages in the SAUNAKA BRAHMANA. The name of BRAHMAVEDA itself, by which this Veda is also frequently called, is therefore explained by them, not as implying the Veda which belongs to the province of the priest Brahman, but the Veda which contains the mysterious doctrine of Brahman, the supreme spirit, into which the human soul becomes finally absorbed. It is probable, therefore, that the very uselessness of the Atharvaveda for sacrificial purposes, and the reluctance which was felt to base its sanctity merely on its incantations and spells, invested it, in the mind of its followers, with a spiritual character, which was then fully developed in the numerous Upanishads now connected with it.

The text of the Atharvaveda is preserved only in the SAUNAKA school. Its Sanhita consists in the present edi-

[17] *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. iii. p. 308.

[18] Muller's *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 447, ff.

tion of it, of 20 KANDAS, or books. Of these, the first 18 are subdivided into 34 PRAPATHAKAS, or chapters, with, altogether, 94 ANUVAKAS, or sections, each containing a number of MANTRAS (the 17th Kanda consisting of a single Prapathaka). The 19th Kanda is not divided into Prapathakas, but into ANUVAKAS, of which it contains seven; and the 20th, likewise divided into ANUVAKAS, has nine, of which the third is subdivided into three PARYAYAS.[19]

The only existing Brahmana of this Veda is the SAUNAKA- or GOPATHA-BRAHMANA.[20] "That this Brahmana," Professor Muller observes, "was composed after the schism of the Charakas and Vajasaneyins, and after the completion of the Vajasaneyi-Sanhita, may be gathered from the fact, that where the first lines of the other Vedas are quoted in the Gopatha, the first line of the Yajurveda is taken from the Vajasaneyins, and not from the Taittiriyas."[21] Each of these Vedas received in time ANUKRAMANIS, or indices, which give the first word of each hymn, the number of verses, the names of the deities, the name and family of the poets, and the metre of every verse. The principal treatise of this kind is the SARVANUKRAMANI, or "The General Index," ascribed to the authorship of SAUNAKA. At a later period the name of Veda was also bestowed on ITIHASAS—legends or legendary works—and PURANAS, collectively; but in this sense it never obtained real currency. UPAVEDAS, or minor Vedas, are also mentioned in the CHARANAVYUHA and other works, and explained by them in the following manner. The Upaveda of the Rig-veda, they say, is the AYURVEDA, or the Veda on medicine —probably the well-known works of Charaka and Susruta; the Upaveda of the Yajurveda is the DHANURVEDA, or the

[19] The text of this Sanhita has been edited by R. Roth and W. D. Whitney (Berlin, 1856).

[20] Edited, with an introductory essay, by Rajendralala Mitra. Calc. 1872.

[21] *Ancient Sanskrit Lit.*, p. 252.

Veda on archery; the Upaveda of the Samaveda is the GANDHARVAVEDA, on music; and the Upaveda of the Atharvaveda is the SILPASASTRA, a work on mechanical arts, or, according to others, the ARTHASASTRAS, works on practical subjects, comprising polity, mechanical science, the training of elephants, horses, and fencing.

In the preceding brief outline of the four Vedas, the question as to the date at which they were composed has not been raised, because, in the present condition of Vedic philology, an answer to it could only be hypothetical. From astronomical facts, based on a statement in a Vaidik calendar, Colebrooke concluded that this calendar was written in the 14th century before the Christian era[22] and though subsequent writers have questioned the full correctness of this conclusion, those most reliable nevertheless admit that the error, if any, could not lessen the antiquity of this calendar by more than 100 or 200 years. As this calendar must have been composed after the Rigveda had been arranged, and as such an arrangement itself must be posterior to the date of its last hymn, a full scope is left for imagination to fill up these intervals. But let it be understood that imagination alone would have to perform this task, since scientific research has not yet yielded any means to check it, or prompt it on, as the case may be; nor is there any real prospect that future discoveries in Sanskrit literature will supply this want. A safer basis, however, may be looked for, if future research restricted itself to the question as to the RELATIVE age of the Vedic writings. Much valuable evidence has already been brought forward in this respect to prove that there are Rishis ancient, and less ancient[23] that there are Rigveda hymns older than

[22] *Miscell. Essays*, vol. i., pp. 109, 110.

[23] See, for instance, J. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, vol. ii. p. 205, ff.

others;[24] but, on the other hand, much confusion has also been produced by starting a theory, that all the Brahmanas belong to one period, and all the hymns to another period preceding it, of which, again, two stages were thought to be discernible, and by assigning dates to the Brahmana period, as well as to each of the two stages of the Mantra period. For, apart from the circumstance, that no evidence whatever has as yet been brought forward to justify an assumption of only two stages of hymns, each of which would comprise only 200 years, it is clear that the similarity of subject-matter alone—such as it marks the literary character of the Brahmanas—cannot be a criterion for determining that *all* the Brahmanas must be more recent than *all* the Sanhitas. That a Brahmana of the Rigveda must be posterior to those hymns of the Rigveda Sanhita which it mentions, but to those alone—again, that a Brahmana of the Samaveda must be younger than the hymns of the Samaveda on which it relies, and so on—cannot be matter of doubt; but as the Sanhita of the Samaveda, for instance, must be more recent than that of the Rigveda, and as no fact whatever has been adduced to shew why the Aitareya Brahmana, or other Brahmanas of the Rigveda, could not have appeared before a Samaveda-Sanhita was made, and so forth in the case of the other Vedas, it follows that it would be entirely unsafe to infer that all the Brahmanas must be later than *all* the hymns of the Rigveda, since not all of them need have existed before the oldest Brahmana of this Veda was composed. A result like this is, unhappily, purely negative, but it may have the advantage of counselling caution and stimulating research.

24 For instance, in Muller's *Ancient Sanskrit Literature.*

THE INSPIRED WRITINGS OF HINDUISM

SANKARA, one of the most renowned and influential scholars of mediæval India, was himself one of the most zealous denouncers of all worships if repugnant to the Vedas. His aim was the propagation of a belief in one immaterial Cause. In his chief work, the Commentary on the text-book of the Vedanta philosophy, he endeavours to prove that the celestial beings named in the Vedic writings are but allegorical personifications of that Supreme Being, and in his Commentary on the Upanishads he compares such gods even to demons, or foes of the human race. If tradition therefore be correct, that he tolerated the modern worship of the sectarian gods—for, let it be remembered, that it is only a vague tradition which ascribes that toleration to him—it is obvious that this admission on his part was, if not an act of weakness and inconsistency, at the best an educational experiment, supposed by him to lead to the end which engrossed his mind. A thousand years, one would think, are a sufficient space of time to prove the error of Sankaracharya. The experiment has had its test, and it has lamentably failed. Another thousand years of a similar experiment, and we feel convinced that no Brahmanical Hindu will then be found to whom it could be denounced as fallacious and mischievous.

But, let us ask what those writings are which the orthodox Hindu is called upon by his creed to consider as inspired, and what are those other works which in the course of time his priests have foisted as such on his credulity?

The oldest tradition is very precise in the answer it gives to the first of these questions. So far from leaving it to the option of a believer to declare at will any book inspired, and so far from recognising any gifted indivi-

dual who might at some future period pretend to receive inspirations from divine apparitions or intuitions, it has carefully defined the personages who alone had been favoured by the Deity, and the revelations they had obtained. The former, it says, are the old Vedic Rishis or saints; and the latter are the hymns of the Rigveda, which, dating from eternity, were "SEEN" by them, and the number of which is one thousand and twenty-eight. Passing, then, over the doubts as to the genuine antiquity of some of these hymns—and we could show that even the most orthodox authorities of India looked upon some as spurious—it is certain that the inspired writings of the Hindus do not exceed the limits of those one thousand and twenty-eight hymns.

The Hindu priesthood, however, has managed to demonstrate that one thousand and twenty-eight hymns mean in reality a very ponderous mass of divinely revealed works. "These hymns," it says to the people, "you must be aware, speak of ritual acts which are unintelligible to you, and they make allusion also to events, human and divine, which are shrouded in obscurity; hence you must admit that those works called BRAHMANAS, which explain the origin and the proper performance of rites—which give illustrations of those events and legendary narratives, and which contain philosophical speculations to boot—are a necessary complement of the inspired Rigveda hymns. "And", say the priests, "there are three other Vedas besides the Rigveda, *viz.,* the Yajur-, Sama-, and Atharva-Veda; but, as the contents of these Vedas," they continue, "are bodily taken from the Rigveda, their inspiration can as little be gainsaid as that of these hymns themselves;" and as the Brahmana portion of these Vedas stands in the same relation to *their* hymnic part as the corresponding portion of the Rigveda stands to the hymns of the latter, the Brahmins conclude that the inspired works of the Hindu religion are the hymns of the four Vedas and the Brahmana works at-

tached to each of them. The theologian, moreover, adds: "And because in the hymns, as well as in the Brahmanas, there are many hints of extreme mysteriousness—allusions to the production of the world, to the qualities of a supreme God, and to the nature of the human soul—those works which contain the authoritative explanation of these mysteries, the UPANISHADS, cannot be disconnected from the inspiration of the hymns and Brahmanas."

Those who have followed the course of the religious development of mankind in general will not feel surprised at this luxuriance of inspired texts: the instincts and the history of a priesthood are alike everywhere. One thousand and twenty-eight hymns, of a few verses each, are but a poor livelihood for a fast-increasing number of holy and idle men: but expand these hymns into a host of works which even the most diligent student could not master in less than several years; apply to their teaching the rule that the pupil must never study them from a manuscript, but receive them orally from his spiritual guide; make them the basis of a complicated ritual, which no one is allowed to perform without a host of priests, and handsome presents to each of them—and what a bright perspective opens itself to a member of the Brahminical caste, and to those who follow in his track!

That the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, which is entirely ritual and legendary, has no claim whatever to be considered by an orthodox Hindu as dating from eternity, like the hymns of the Rigveda, and as supernaturally composed, results from the tradition to which we have referred; for, though the doctrine of their divine origin has been current in India for more than two thousand years, no Rishi has ever been mentioned into whom they were divinely inspired, except, perhaps, in the case of one, the Satapatha-Brahmana. But the sanctity of this very Brahmana was so little acknowledged by common consent when it was composed, that it marks,

on the contrary, a great schism in the ancient religion of India; in fact, when compared with the hymns of the Rigveda, it is so late that there is strong reason to surmise that it did not exist in Panini's time. This grammarian himself, when teaching the names of some Brahmanas, gives us rules for distinguishing between ancient and modern Brahmanas; and even if, contrary to the evidence supplied by him, a single one of those ancient Brahmanas had come down to us, his rules would bear testimony to the fact that in his time the authors of those works were not yet looked upon as inspired. A very learned writer on Sanskrit literature, indeed, has asserted, on the authority of those rules, that the affix *in* which terminates the name of such ancient Brahmanas as the Sailalin, Karmandin, &c., is "a mark that the name to which it is added is that of an author considered as a Rishi, or inspired writer." But such is not the case; for, Panini, who distinguishes between works that were "seen" or are inspired, between works that were "made" or composed, and works that were "promulgated" or taught, states in the clearest possible manner that those "ancient" Brahmanas were not "seen," but only "promulgated" by the personages after whom they are named.

Of the inspired character of the Upanishads still less need be said. It is, in India itself, upheld only either by those theologians who—like their commentator, the celebrated Sankaracharya, or the translator of some of these theosophical works, Ram Mohun Roy—endeavoured to give a stamp of sacredness to the Vedanta philosophy founded on them, or by those adherents of other philosophical schools, which appeal for the truth of their axioms to passages from these works. At the time when the priests had succeeded in laying down the law that instruction in sacred works could be imparted only by them, and was to be "heard," or orally received by the pupil from the teacher, they gave currency to a term, "SRUTI"—"hearing"—implying by it that the texts which the pupil heard from their mouth were ins-

pired works; but in the early literature even this term comprises merely hymns and Brahmanas. It is only at a late period of Hinduism that we meet with "SRUTI" as applied also to the Upanishad literature.

The inspired network of the hymnic portion of the three Vedas, called the Yajur-, Sama-, and Atharva-Veda, is apparently closer drawn than that of the other writings just named; but now that it is laid open before the investigating mind of modern Europe and India; now that the spell is broken which made the study of the Veda consist of intonating its verses to the melody of the Guru, and mechanically committing them to memory; now that Indian and European industry has given us in print not merely the obscure words of the hymns, but also the commentaries which lead us into their inner meaning, no Hindu can shrink from the duty of examining the grounds on which the inspiration of these three Vedas rests.

He will probably not offer much resistance when he is asked to reject that of the Atharvaveda. He possesses abundant evidence that no Atharvaveda was known at an early period of Hindu life. The old and orthodox authorities of India speak of three Vedas only—the Rig-, Yajur-, and Sama-Veda; even late commentators, though the Atharvaveda existed at their time, pay little attention to it; it is ignored by the ritual-philosophers, the Mimansists, whose influence is felt wherever a sacrificial fire receives pious offerings. TRAYI VIDYA, "the *three-fold*," not the fourfold, "wisdom" is in the mouth of every learned Hindu. Will he then contend for the inspired origin and the eternal existence of those incantations and charms which aim at "the attainment of wealth, the destruction of evil influences, the downfall of enemies, success in love or play, the removal of petty pests, recovery from sickness, and even the growth of hair on a bald pate?" Yet, though the character of the hymns of this Veda differs from that of the Yajur- and Sama-Veda, the causes whence all these three Vedas arose, are similar; and

the test by which a Hindu may judge of the claims to inspiration of one of them, is the test which he may apply to the claims of the remaining two.

The hymns of the Rigveda are essentially poetical; they make frequent allusion, it is true, to pious and sacrificial acts; but so far only as the latter are the concomitants of the pious and poetical feelings of the poet, or as they are connected with events in his personal life. We meet, therefore, with many hymns which have nothing to do with religious performances: thus, some describe the grandeur of natural phenomena; here a gambler "laments over the passion that beguiles him into sin," and there a Rishi even ridicules the worship performed by the priests. In short, these hymns, if taken as a whole, are the genuine product of the poets' minds: they reflect the gradual growth of a nation's life; they were not composed for any ritual purposes. On the other hand, there is nothing genuine in the Yajur- and Sama-Vedas. These Vedas are arranged and written merely to serve as prayer-books at various sacrificial acts. The collection of the Rigveda hymns, as one may *a priori* conclude from their very character, did not admit of any arrangement answering systematically the order of an elaborate ceremonial; the arrangement of the two other Vedas, on the contrary, is entirely adapted to it, and therefore throughout artificial. Thus, the verses of the Samaveda were intoned at the sacrifices performed with the juice of the Soma plant, and the order in which these verses occur is that of the sacrificial acts of which the Soma sacrifices consist. Again, those of the Yajurveda are arranged according to the rites of a great variety of sacrifices, at which the officiating priests had to mutter them inaudibly.

Now, so firmly rooted is the belief in the divine origin of these Vedas, that it seems almost to have overshadowed the belief in the sanctity of the Rigveda itself; not indeed in spite of their unpoetical character, but on account of it. For, judging from the opinions met with in the most orthodox writers, the Brahmins seem to have

concluded that the Rigveda, however beautiful from an aesthetical point of view, was, after all, more an ornamental than a useful book; that its real destiny is fulfilled in those two other Vedas, taken from it, which a contingent of sixteen officiating priests, supported by butchers, ladle-holders, and choristers, could turn to practical account at ceremonies regulated in their minutest detail, and some of them lasting as many as a hundred days. And, as the sacrifices requiring the muttering of the Yajurveda were even more imposing and more elaborate than those which fall within the range of the Samaveda rites, we find that the sanctity of the Yajurveda ultimately outstripped that of the rival Veda too. "The Yajurveda," says Sayana, the great commentator on the Vedas, "is like a wall, the two other Vedas like paintings [on it]." Yet, as we before observed, the inspired character of these later Vedas rests on the assumption that their verses are borrowed from the Rigveda; that they are, in fact, portions of it. So far as the Samaveda is concerned, this assumption is justified; for, though in the present edition of this Veda there are some verses which do not occur in the present text of the Rigveda, we must remember that this text is but one of the recensions of the principal Veda, and that the missing verses may have existed, and probably did exist, in some other recension of it. But a comparison of the Yajurveda with the Rigveda does not allow us to stretch probabilities to this extent. There are portions of the Yajurveda which can at no time have belonged to any recension of the Rich—we mean those passages in prose, called Yajus, whence the Yajurveda derives its name; for, there is no hymn in the Rigveda that is not composed in verse. Here then this question obtrudes itself—Who are the Rishis who "saw" these passages in prose? Tradition, so far as we know it, is just as silent respecting them as it is respecting the authors of the Brahmanas. But as little as these latter works can become inspired because they are tacked to the hymnic collection which was "seen" by

the Rishis of old, so little can inspiration pass like the electric fluid from the Rigveda verses, found in the Yajus, to those passages in prose which, from ritual reasons, had been joined to them. Yet, setting aside these pseudo-revealed passages, and those verses of the Yajurveda, too, which do not occur in the actual recension of the Rigveda, we shall be at once enabled to judge, by even a superficial glance, at how the inspired poetry of the Rigveda found its way into the Sama- and Yajurveda, on what grounds the Brahmins invite the nation to recognise the last two Vedas as inspired texts.

A Brahmin will tell his nation that the verses of the Sama- and Yajurveda are the same as those of the Rigveda, and, if need be, he may perhaps show that a good number of them do really occur in the original Veda. We, however, are impertinent enough to test that sameness by book, chapter, and verse; we marshal side by side the figures which mark the position of these verses in their respective Vedas—and what do these figures reveal? A Rigveda piecemeal: verses of the same hymn transposed, verses of different hymns shuffled about, and even verses of different authors strung together, as if they had proceeded from the same mind. We expected to find in the later Vedas, the feelings and thoughts of the ancient poets, but we hear only the sounds of their words; we were promised possession, in these Vedas, of a living portion of the Rigveda, but we discover there only its scattered remains. In short, the Brahmin juggles before our eyes what he calls an identity of these Vedas with the Rigveda, yet what we really obtain is but a miserable counterfeit of it.

Well may the disciples of Loyala feel humiliated when they look at the consummate skill with which this Brahminical legerdemain was performed, long before their master had taught them how to govern the world by obfuscating its intellect; for there is no priesthood in the universe which, by a stratagem like that we have described, can boast of so splendid a success in metamor-

phosing its most sacred book into a dull attendant on artificial rites, and in diverting the stream of the national life from its original course.

While acknowledging, however, the intellectual capacity of those Brahmins who fashioned the hymns of the Rigveda in a series of "inspired" texts, we ought not to forget that they were powerfully assisted in their task by an invention which, though some may imagine to be of recent date, those Hindu priests are fully entitled to claim as theirs—we mean the invention of writings without a writer—anoymousness. Pride in his personality is the natural feeling of a man whose work proceeds from the promptings of his own genius and will; and nations likewise have the instinctive feeling that they uphold their own individuality by guarding from oblivion the memory of their deserving men. Unless, therefore, this innate feeling be intentionally subdued, it is merely an accident—political or literary—when works that merit to be remembered go down to posterity without the names of their authors, since so many names of authors survive without their works. We do not know, it is true, the authors of the Nibelungen and of the Kutrun; we can speak only of the compiler of the Edda; but it is exceptions like these that prove the rule; for even a name like Homer—probably devoid of a personal reality—shows that the nation which put it forward was eager to possess an individuality in the poet of the Iliad and Odyssey.

But, when man is not the agent of his own acts, or if, for good or evil purposes, he wishes or is forced to personate more than his own self, he sinks his individuality into a brotherhood, he becomes anonymous. To assume it to be a pure accident that the authors of the Yajus and of the Brahmanas have remained unknown, would be assuming that all those artificial and elaborate works were of unintentional origin, and that the Hindu mind is an exception to the general law. But that the proud feeling of individuality was as strong in India as it is everywhere else, and at all times too, is evidenced

by the long list of proper names which represent the authors of her greatest poetical, philosophical, grammatical, and other works; and it is borne out by the fact that the Hindus remember the names of their oldest Rishis, the "inspired seers" of the Rigveda hymns: for, whether these personages existed or not, whether they *were* the authors of the works or hymns ascribed to them, matters not. To the Hindu mind they are realities: and since, on the other hand, Hindu tradition supplies us with a full account of the names of those who "collected" or aranged the Vedas, and who "promulgated" or taught the Brahmanas and Upanishads, the very jealousy it betrays in perpetuating the memory of merits inferior certainly to those of authorship, proves that the names of their "inspired" authors cannot have remained unknown through chance or carelessness.

The anoymousness of these Vedic writings is, however, up to this day the staple argument in proof of their sanctity. In a spirited drama, written probably six hundred years ago, a Jaina mendicant apostrophizes a follower of Buddha who intends to persuade him of the superiority of his creed over that of the Jaina sect, in the following terms: "But who has laid down these laws?" "The omniscient, sacred Buddha," is the reply. "And whence know ye that Buddha is all wise?" "Why," says the Buddhist, "because it is written so in his sacred books." The Brahminical author of this satire is obviously alive to the more solid basis on which the sanctity of his own revelations rest. The belief in *their* genuineness does not depend on the testimony of those by whom they were composed. Public opinion has never heard of any author of them: hence they must be of superhuman workmanship.

In surveying the origin of the three later Vedas and that of their liturgic and theosophical appendages, we stand, as it were, on the heights of Hinduism; but the descent from them to the region of its actual condition is easy, and scarcely requires a guide. For, once acquain-

ted with the spirit that engendered these Vedas and Brahmanas, with its method of fabricating inspired texts, and the conclusion wrought by its powerful engine, anonymousness, we may feel curiosity as to the turnings and byways of the road; but the journey itself is monotonous. There is one reflection, however, which may arrest our steps.

It must seem a matter of course that so fertile a soil as the sacrificial Vedas, and the ritual, legendary, and mystical Brahmanas could not remain without an abundant crop of works; human works, to be sure, with their authors' name duly recorded and recognised, but works as indispensable to a proper use of those "inspired" texts, as they were indispensable to turn the ornamental Rigveda into a book of practical utility. They are the Kalpa works. But even these writings could not do justice to the store of services that might be rendered by a Brahmin to his countrymen. The Kalpa works merely treat of those great and public ceremonies which, for a time, may handsomely stock the budget of the officiating priests, but which are too sporadic and too select to be a permanent and solid livelihood. A number of daily and household ceremonies was evidently needed to bring the whole life of a believer under the control and into the grasp of his spiritual master, the priest. These ceremonies, then, were regulated by the Grihya books; but as the life of even the most pious society cannot be entirely filled up with rites that take place at conception and birth, tonsure and investiture, marriage and the like, it was prudent to impart a religious stamp also to habits and customs—in one word, to the whole organism of society. A special class of works—the Samayacharika rules—was therefore devoted to the ordinary practices; and from these resulted ultimately the so-called legal works, amongst which Manu's law-book is known as the most prominent. Everything now was as complete as it could be. Social and religious duties are henceforward synonymous; DHARMA is the word which designates both.

All the institutions of society have now become of Vedic origin; for the laws of Manu and others are founded on the habits and customs laid down in the works complimentary to the Grihya works; these complete the Kalpa works; and without the Kalpa works the practical Vedas would be unpractical. The chain which links religion and politics together is, on several occasions, brought home to the Hindu mind by a reasoning like this: Society cannot perform the duties prescribed in these sacred books unless it possesses a king, who watches over the safety of the people; but a king cannot exist without the produce of the land; land, however, yields no produce without rain; rain is sent down by the favour of the gods; such favour is obtained by means of sacrificial acts; but where there is no Brahmin there is no sacrificial act: king and Brahmin thus close the circle within which the people has to obey the behests of both.

There is, then, that difference between the Vedic works and those which are the present foundation of the Brahmanic belief—that the former were inspired for the exclusive interests of priests, whereas the latter were inspired for the combined benefit of the priests and kings. But the latter, the PURANAS, have this in common with the three "practical" Vedas and the Brahmanas—that they are likewise "inspired," because they are anonymous; for tradition, which knows all about Vyasa, their wonderful compiler, has concealed the names of the holy personages who received them direct from the Deity. If comparison wants to go beyond this, it must hold the Vedic text before a mirror which reflects a caricature. There is no trace of Vedic poetry or of Vedic thought in all those Purana works composed in glorification of the epical Pantheon of India, and more especially in that of the Hindu triad—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. There is scarcely a legend or myth narrated by them which can claim the remotest connexion with a Vedic myth. There is no ceremony they teach which, put even against the ceremonial of the Brahmana and Kalpa works, does not

appear devoid of all that may please the imagination or elevate the mind; and with the exception of a few of them, their style even is tedious, slovenly, and to some extent ungrammatical. Considered as a whole, these Puranas contain cosmogonies, which are a superstructure of epical and modern legends on the creative theories propounded in some of the systems of philosophy; theogonies, which expand the myths of the great epos, the Mahabharata, in favour of the particular god whom it was the intention of the writer to place at the top of the Pantheon; they profess to know the genealogies of patriarchs and the chief dynasties of kings; they are bits of law-books in imitation of Manu and Yajnavalkya; they pretend to explain ancient ceremonies, and abound in the description of rites which vie with one another in the absurdest detail; they prophesy. And as it is plain, from this summary of their contents, that they aimed at being the books that teach everything, and with the weight of religious authority, we cannot feel surprised that some of them considered it necessary also to expatiate on sacred geography or the description of places where there is a special chance of attaining to eternal bliss, on medicine and astronomy, on archery, rhetoric, prosody, and grammar. But the low position which these works occupy in the household of Sanskrit literature, is nowhere more manifest than when they attempt to meddle with those scientific branches of human knowledge, where every student can test the kind of omniscience by which they were inspired.

The modern date of the existing Puranas has long ceased to be matter of doubt to any one who reads them without prejudice; but even an orthodox Hindu must shut his eyes to all evidence, literary, historical, and grammatical, if he attempt to assert their antiquity. From the abundance of disproof which is open to him, we need, for curiosity's sake, only point to one. That works called Puranas—*i.e.*, "old,"—may have existed at ancient times, and that they may have combined some por-

tion of the matter embodied in the actual works bearing this name, is not improbable; for, the word itself, as designating a class of writings, occurs as early as in the law-book of Manu, though this book itself, as we have seen, may be called recent when compared with the Vedic texts. A definition, however, of what such Puranas are, does not occur before the beginning of the Christian era, when the lexicographer Amarasinha says, that a Purana is a work which has "five characteristic marks." This definition is again explained by the commentators on the glossary of Amarasinha; and the oldest of them did not live earlier than about four hundred years ago. He says that these five characteristic portions of a Purana are—primary creation; secondary creation, or the destruction and renovation of the world; genealogy—viz., of gods and patriarchs; reigns of the Manus; and history—viz., of the princes supposed to derive their pedigree from the sun or moon. Now, in applying this definition to the actual Puranas, Wilson, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar, who translated the whole Vishnu Purana, and was thoroughly conversant with these works, observes, "that not in any one instance do they exactly conform to it; that to some of them it is wholly inapplicable; whereas to others it only partially applies."[1] Whatever, therefore, may have been the nature of the original Puranas, and whatever scope one may give to the assumption that the actual Puranas have borrowed part of their contents from some older works of the same name, it is obvious that, in their

[1]A translation into English of the most interesting portion of these works was made in India many years ago, under the personal direction of this celebrated and learned scholar. With the consent of his widow, and by the liberality of Government, this important MS. collection—the only one which enables the English student, not conversant with Sanskrit, to examine the principal contents of the Puranas—forms now part of the library of the India Office.

present shape, they cannot reckon their age by many centuries.

When, by priestcraft and ignorance, a nation has lost itself so far as to look upon writings like these as divinely inspired, there is but one conclusion to be drawn: it has arrived at the turning-point of its destinies. Hinduism stands at this point, and we anxiously pause to see which way it will direct its steps. For several centuries, it is true, its position has seemed stationary; but the power of present circumstances, social and political, is such that it can no longer continue so. All barriers to religious imposition having broken down since the modern Puranas were received by the masses as the source of their faith, sects have sprung up which not merely endanger religion, but society itself; tenets have been propounded, which are an insult to the human mind; practices have been introduced, which must fill every true Hindu with confusion and shame. There is no necessity for examining them in detail, by unveiling, for instance, the secrets of the Tantra literature; nor need we be at the pains of convincing the intelligent portion of the Hindu community; for, the excellent works which it sent forth from Calcutta, Benares, and Bombay, and the enlightened views which it propagates through its periodical press, fully prove that, equal in mental accomplishments to the advanced European mind, it requires no evidence of the gulf which separates the present state of the nation from its remote past.

But what we do hold is, that all the activity of that learned portion will not avert the danger which threatens the future destiny of Hinduism, unless it boldly grapples with the very root of the disease. The causes of the gradual degeneracy of Hinduism, are, indeed, not different from those to which other religions are subject, when allowed to grow in the dark. In Europe, religious depravity received its check when the art of printing allowed the light of publicity to enter into the book whence her nations derive their faith; and no other means will

check it in India than the admission of the masses to that original book which is always on their lips, but which now is the monopoly of that infinitesimal fraction of the Brahminical caste able to understand its sense; and admission, also, to that other and important literature which has at all periods of Hinduism striven to prove to the people that their real faith is neither founded on the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, nor on the Puranas, but on the Rigveda hymns.

If those intelligent Hindus of whom we are speaking have the will and the energy to throw open that book, and the literature connected with it, to the people at large, without caring for the trammels imposed on caste by the politicians of late ages, we have no misgivings as to the new vitality which they will impart to its decaying life. The result is foreshadowed, indeed, by what their forefathers attempted to do, but did not succeed in accomplishing, because they had not the courage to break through the artificial bonds which had already in their day enslaved Hindu society. We will brieffy advert therefore to their views and to the light in which they must have read their most ancient text.

The hymns of the Rigveda, as we observed before, are of an entirely poetical stamp. "They almost invariably combine," as Professor Wilson writes, "the attributes of prayer and praise. The power, the vastness, the generosity, the goodness, and even the personal beauty of the deity addressed, are described in highly laudatory strains; and his past bounties or exploits rehearsed or glorified; in requital of which commendations, and of the libations or oblations which he is solicited to accept, and in approval of the rite in his honour, at which his presence is invoked, he is implored to bestow blessings on the person who has instituted the ceremony, and sometimes, but not so commonly, also on the author or writer of the prayer. The blessings prayed for are, for the most part, of a temporal and personal description—wealth, food, life, posterity, cattle, cows, and horses. . . There

are a few indications of a hope of immortality and of future happiness, but they are neither frequent nor, in general, distinctly announced, although the immortality of the gods is recognised." The following verses taken from the second Octade of the Rigveda—in the literal translation of it by Professor Wilson—may afford an idea of the general tenor of these hymns. They are addressed, the first four to Pushan, the nourishing Sun; the five latter to Heaven and Earth:

"I. The greatness of the strength of the many-worshippped Pushan is universally lauded; no one detracts (from his praise): his praise displeases no one. Desirous of happiness I adore him, whose protection is ever nigh; who is the source of felicity; who, when devoutly worshipped, blends with the thought of all (his worshippers); who, though a Deity, is united with the sacrifice.

"2. I exalt thee, Pushan, with praises, that thou mayest hasten (to the sacrifice), like a rapid (courser) to the battle; that those mayest bear us across the combat, like a camel; therefore do I, a mortal, invoke thee, the divine bestower of happiness, for thy friendship; and do thou render our invocation, productive (of benefit); render them productive (of success) in battles.

"3. Through thy friendship, Pushan, they who are diligent in thy praise and assiduous in thy worship, enjoy (abundance), through thy protection; by (assiduous) worship they enjoy (abundance); as consequent upon the recent favour, we solicit infinite riches: free from anger, and entitled to ample praise, be ever accessible to us; be our leader in every encounter.

"4. Free from anger, and liberal of gifts, be nigh to us, for the acceptance of this our (offering); be nigh to those who solicit food; we have recourse to thee, destroyer of enemies, with pious hymns. I never cease, Pushan, acceptor of offerings, to think of thee; I never disregard thy friendship."

"1. Those two, the divine Heaven and Earth, are

the diffusers of happpiness on all, encouragers of truth, able to sustain the water (of the rains), suspicious of birth, and energetic (in action); in the interval between whom proceeds the pure and divine Sun for (the discharge of his) duties.

"2. Wide-spreading, vast, unconnected, the father and mother (of all beings), they two preserve the worlds. Resolute, as if (for good) of embodied (beings), are Heaven and Earth, and the father has invested everything with (visible) forms.

"3. The pure and the resolute son of (these) parents, the bearer (of rewards) [the sun], sanctifies the world by his intelligence; as well as the milch cow (the earth), and the vigorous bull (the heaven), and daily milks the pellucid milk (of the sky).

"4. He it is, amongst gods (the most divine), amongst (pious) works the most pious, who gave birth to the all-delighting heaven and earth; who measured them both, and, for the sake of holy rites, propped them up with undecaying pillars.

"5. Glorified by us, grant to us, Heaven and Earth, abundant food and great strength, whereby we may daily multiply mankind; bestow upon us commendable vigour."

As with the exception of a few hymns which have no reference to the praise or worship of the elementary gods, the scope and tenor of all the lays of the Rigveda are similar to those we have quoted, the first question suggested by them is whether they contain any laws or injunctions concerning sacrificial rites. The answer is in the negative. They allude to such rites, some with less, and others with more detail; but these allusions are no more than a record or a narrative of the practices of the poets of the hymns. We are told, it is true, that the practices of those holy men are tantamount to a law ordaining them; but it is clear that such an inference is purely arbitrary. That it was strenuously opposed, moreover, by the highest authorities of ancient and mediæval India is borne out by the works and efforts of

that influential school which professes the Vedanta tenets, and which counts Sankaracharya amongst its teachers and divines. No Hindu doubts of the thorough orthodoxy of that school, and yet all its writings reject "work," that is, the observance of the sacrificial rites, as a means conducive to eternal bliss. It rejects, therefore, implicitly, the sanctity or authority of those "sacrificial" Vedas, the only object of which is the institution of such rites; and with them, as a matter of consequence, the binding power of the Brahmanas and the worship founded on them.

The next important question relates to the doctrine professed by those poets who are supposed to have received the Rigveda hymns from a deity. The answer to it is complicated from a European, but simple from a Hindu, point of view. To the European inquirer the hymns of the Rigveda represent the product of various epochs of Hindu antiquity: in some he will recognise a simple, in others a complex, ritual; some will reflect to his mind a pastoral and, as it were, primitive life, others a people skilled in several arts and engaged in mercantile and maritime pursuits. And, in investigating the religious views expressed by these hymns, he will find accordingly, in some, the worship of the physical powers, whereas he will discover in others the idea of a Supreme Creator of the universe. He will perceive in them, in short, a progressive religious thought, beginning, as everywhere religion began, with the adoration of the elements, proceeding to an attempt at understanding their origin, and ending with the idea, more or less clear, of one creative cause. The last stage of this development is indicated, for instance, by a hymn which has already acquired some celebrity, as attention was drawn to it by so early a Sanskritist as the illustrious Colebrooke, and as it has found its way into several European works. It runs as follows:

"Then was there no entity nor nonentity; no world, nor sky, nor aught above it; nothing anywhere in the happiness of any one, involving or involved; nor water,

deep or dangerous. Death was not; nor then was immortality: nor distinction of day or night. But THAT breathed without afflation, single with (Swadha) her who is sustained within him. Other than him, nothing existed (which) since (has been). Darkness there was; (for) this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was undistinguishable (like fluids mixed in) waters; but that mass, which was covered by the husk, was (at length) produced by the power of contemplation. First, desire was formed in his mind, and that became the original productive seed; which the wise, recognising it by the intellect in their hearts, distinguish, in nonentity, as the bond of entity. Did the luminous ray of these (creative acts) expand in the middle? or above? or below? That productive seed at once became providence (or sentient souls) and matter (or the elements): she, who is sustained within himself, was inferior; and he, who heeds, was superior. Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare, whence and why this creation took place? The gods are subsequent to the production of this world; then who can know whence it proceeded; or whence this varied world arose? or whether it upheld itself or not? He who in the highest heaven is the Ruler of this universe does indeed know; but not another can possess that knowledge."

The orthodox Hindu mind does not admit in these hymns of a successive development, like that which we must assert. It considers, as mentioned before, all the hymns of the Rigveda as being of the same age; as dating from eternity. The Upanishads, and still more explicitly the Vedanta writers, cannot therefore allow any real discord to exist between the adoration of the phenomena of nature and the belief in one Supreme God. They solve the difficulty by concluding that the elementary gods are but allegorical personifications of the great soul, the primitive cause of the universe. And even Upanishads and Vedantists were already preceded in this view by Yaska, the oldest exegete of the Vedic hymns, who, on one

occasion, says: "There are three deities (Devatas): Agni (Fire), who resides on earth; Vayu (Wind), or Indra (Firmament) who resides in the intermediate region (beteen heaven and earth); and Surya (Sun), who resides in heaven. . . . Of the Devata there is but one soul; but the Devata having a variety of attributes, it is praised in many ways: other gods are merely portions of THE ONE SOUL."

Upanishads, therefore, and Vedanta, the type of Hindu orthodoxy, will by no means allow that Hinduism, represented by the Rigveda, was at any period idolatry; they maintain that all the Rishis intended to inculcate the standard tenet of Monotheism. Whether they are justified in this theory does not affect the practical conclusion at which we aim. For, this much is certain, that they interpret the Vedic hymns so as to derive from them the belief in one God, and that they quote numerous passages by which they intend to invalidate all doubts to the contrary.

But, what is remarkable, too, during the long period of Hindu theology which is comprised by the Upanishad and Vedanta literature, there is no attempt on its part at expanding this tenet of Monotheism into any doctrinal mysticism. They abound in the most pious phraseology: they show that the Vedic text inculcates the idea of the immateriality, the infiniteness, and the eternity of the Supreme Spirit; they expatiate on its qualities of goodness, thought, and beatitude; but they are entirely free from any tendency to justify the notion of a mystical incarnation of that Spirit such as is taught, for instance, by the votaries of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. From the words of the Veda, it must be granted, they endeavour to prove that the human soul having been created by that One Spirit, it is bound to maintain its original purity, and if it lose it by its acts in the world, it must renew its earthly existence until it is capable of commingling with the divine source whence it sprang. But beyond this doctrine of transmigration—which is incidental to all the

Monotheistic religions of mankind—it does not even try to found any religious dogma on the Rigveda hymns. In one word, the pre-eminently orthodox schools demonstrate that *the* Veda imposes no observance of a superstitious ritual; that it enjoins no law regulating for all eternity social or political life, no dogma except the belief in One God, no duty except that of living in conformity with the nature of that God from whom the human soul has emanated.

The bane of the social edifice within which these schools had to live and to teach VEDANTA, that is, the "purport (ANTA) of the Veda," thwarted their full success, which would have stopped the degeneracy of Hinduism they foresaw; but, however powerful, it could never entirely crush their existence, or completely stifle the influence which they exercised on the nation. The adherents of these schools always fostered a spirit of investigation, and by it threw doubts, at least, into the mind of the masses as to the authority of those law-books which profess to regulate society for all eternity. To their influence, in our days, we must ascribe the quiet disappearance of the practice of Sati after they were shown that the injunction of burning the surviving widow on the funeral pile of her husband had arisen from a misreading of a Rigveda verse. Their learning is active in convincing the masses that the remarriage of widows is not prohibited by the Vedic text; and to them are due the progressive changes which mark, for instance, the laws of inheritance, propounded by the existing legal authorities, as compared with those presented by Manu.

We may, therefore, still entertain the hope that the regeneration of Hinduism will proceed from these schools, provided that they possess the energy to refuse any compromise with the sectarian worship, which has brought Hinduism into contempt and ridicule. The means which they possess for combating that enemy is as simple as it is irresistible; a proper instruction of the growing generation in its ancient literature, an instruc-

tion, however wholly different from that now constituting the education of a Hindu youth; to whom reading the Veda is jabbering thoughtlessly the words of the verse, or intoning it to the melody of a teacher as ignorant as himself of its sense; who, by studying grammar, understands cramming his memory with some grammatical forms, without any notion as to the linguistic laws that regulate them; who believes that he can master philosophy or science by sticking to the textbook of one school and disregarding its connexion with all the rest of the literature. That such a method and such a division of labour do not benefit the mind is amply evidenced by the crippled results they have brought to light. The instruction which India requires, though adapted to her peculiar wants—religious, scientific, and political—must be based on the system which has invigorated the European mind; which, free from the restrictions of rank or caste, tends to impart to it independence of thought and solidity of character.

EVOLUTION OF INDIAN THOUGHT

We may divide Hinduism into three great periods, which for brevity's sake we will call the Vedic, Epic, and Puranic periods, as our knowledge of the first is derived from the sacred books called the VEDA; of the second, from the epic poem called the RAMAYANA, and more especially from the great epos, the MAHABHARATA; while the chief source of our information relative to the last period is that class of mythological works known under the name of PURANAS and TANTRAS. It is necessary here to guard the reader against attempting to connect dates with the earlier of those periods. It has not been uncommon for writers on this subject to assign thousands of years before the Christian era as the starting-point of various phases of Hindu antiquity; others, more cautious, marked the beginnings of certain divisions of Vedic works with 1200, 1000, 800, and 600 years B.C. The truth is, that while Hindu literature itself is almost without known dates, owing either to the peculiar organisation of the Hindu mind, or to the convulsions of Indian history, the present condition of Sanskrit philology does not afford the scholar the requisite resources for embarking with any chance of success in such chronological speculations...In the meantime, the utmost stretch of assumption which in the actual condition of Sanskrit philology it is permitted to make is, that the latest writings of the Vedic class are not more recent than the 2nd century before Christ. A like uncertainty hangs over the period at which the two great epic poems of India were composed, although there is reason to surmise that the lower limits of that period did not reach beyond the beginning of the Christian era. The Puranic period, on the other hand, all scholars are agreed to regard as corresponding with part of our mediæval history.

If the RIG-VEDA—the oldest of the Vedas, and pro-

bably the oldest literary document in existence—coincided with the beginning of Hindu civilization, the popular creed of the Hindus, as depicted in some of its hymns, would reveal not only the original creed of this nation, but throw a strong light on the original creed of humanity itself. Unhappily, however, the imagination, indulging in such an hypothesis, would have as little foundation to work on as that which would fix the chronological position of this Veda. The Hindus, as depicted in these hymns, are far removed from the starting-point of human society; nay, they may fairly claim to be ranked among those already civilised communities experienced in arts, defending their homes and property in organised warfare, acquainted even with many vices which only occur in an advanced condition of artificial life. Yet in examining the ideas expressed in the greatest number of the RIG-VEDA hymns, it cannot be denied that they are neither ideas engendered by an imagination artificially influenced, nor such as have made a compromise with philosophy. The Hindu of these hymns is essentially engrossed by the might of the elements. The powers which turn his awe into pious subjection and veneration are—AGNI, the fire of the sun and lightning; INDRA, the bright, cloudless firmament; the MARAUTS, or winds; SURYA, the sun; USHAS, the dawn and various kindred manifestations of the luminous bodies and nature in general. He invokes them, not as representatives of a superior being, before whom the human soul professes its humility; not as superior beings themselves, which may reveal to his searching mind the mysteries of creation or eternity. but because he wants their assisance against enemies—because he wishes to obtain from them rain, food, cattle, health, and other worldly goods. He complains to them of his troubles and reminds them of the wonderful deeds they performed of yore, to coax them, as it were, into acquiescence and friendly help. "We proclaim eagerly, MARUTS, your ancient greatness, for the sake of inducing your prompt appearance, as the indication of (the approach of) the showerer of benefits;" or:

"'Offer your nutritious viands to the great hero (INDRA), who is pleased by praise, and to VISHNU (one of the forms of the sun), the two invincible deities who ride upon the radiant summit of the clouds as upon a well-trained steed. INDRA and VISHNU, the devout worshipper glorifies the radiant aproach of you two who are the granters of desires, and who bestow upon the mortal who worships you an immediately receivable (reward), through the distribution of that fire which is the scatterer (of desired blessings).'' Such is the strain in which the Hindu of that period addresses his gods. He seeks them, not for his spiritual, but for his material welfare. Ethical considerations are therefore foreign to these instinctive outbursts of the pious mind. Sin and evil, indeed, are often adverted to, and the gods are praised because they destroy sinners and evil-doers; but one would err in associating with these words our notions of sin or wrong. A sinner, in these hymns, is a man who does not address praises to those elementary deities, or who does not gratify them with the oblations they receive at the hands of the believer. He is the foe, the robber, the demon—in short, the borderer infesting the territory of the "pious" man, who, in his turn, injures and kills, but in adoring Agni, Indra, and their kin, is satisfied that he can commit no evil act. Yet we should be likewise wrong did we judge of those acts of retaliation by the standard of our own ethical laws. So far, indeed, from reflecting unfavourably on the internal condition of the Hindu community, the features of which may be gathered from these hymns, they seem, on the contrary, to bespeak the union and brotherhood which existed amongst its members; and the absence, in general, of hymns which appeal to the gods for the suppression of internal dissensions or public vices, bears, apparently, testimony to the good moral condition of the people whose wants are recorded in these songs.

It may be imagined that the worship of elementary beings like those we have mentioned was originally a simple and harmless one. By far the greatest number of the

Rig-Veda hymns know of but one sort of offering made to these gods; it consists of the juice of the Soma or moon-plant, which, expressed and fermented, was an exhilarating and inebriating beverage, and for this reason, probably, was deemed to invigorate the gods, and to increase their beneficial potency. It was presented to them in ladles, or sprinkled on the sacred Kusa grass. Clarified butter, too, poured on fire, is mentioned in several hymns as an oblation agreeable to the gods; and it may have belonged to this, as we hold, primitive stage of the Vedic worship.

There is a class of hymns, however, to be found in the Rig-Veda which depart already materially from the simplicity of the conceptions we are referring to. In these, which we conceive to be of another order, this instinctive utterance of feeling makes room for the language of speculation; the allegories of poetry yield to the mysticism of the reflecting mind; and the mysteries of nature becoming more keenly felt, the circle of beings which overawe the popular mind becomes enlarged. Thus, the objects by which Indra, Agni, and the other deities are propitiated, become gods themselves; Soma, especially, the moon-plant and its juice, is invoked as the bestower of all worldly boons. The animal sacrifice—the properties of which seem to be more mysterious than the offerings of Soma, or of clarified butter—is added to the original rites. We will quote a few verses from the second book of the Rig-Veda, which may illustrate the essential difference between this order of hymns and those we alluded to before. It is the horse of the sacrifice which is invoked by the worshipper, and its properties are praised in the following strain:

"Thy great birth, O Horse, is to be glorified; whether first springing from the firmament or from the water, inasmuch as thou hast neighed, for thou hast the wings of the falcon and the limbs of the deer. Trita harnessed the horse which was given by Yama, Indra first mounted him, and Gandharba seized his reins. Vasus, you fabricated the horse from the sun. Thou, horse, art Yama: thou art Aditya, thou art Trita by a mysterious act: thou art

associated with Soma. The sages have said there are three bindings of thee in heaven," &c.

Mystical language like this doubtless betrays the aberration of the religious instinct of the nation: but it also reveals the fact, that the pious mind of the Hindus was no longer satisfied with the adoration of the elementary or natural powers; it shows that religion endeavoured to penetrate into the mysteries of creation. This longing we find, then, expressed in other hymns, which mark the beginning of the *philosophical creed of the Vedic period.* The following few verses may tend to illustrate the nature of this third class of hymns, as they occur in the oldest Veda: "I have beheld the Lord of Men," one poet sings, "with seven sons [i.e., the seven solar rays], of which delightful and benevolent (deity), who is the object of our invocation, there is an all-prevailing middle brother, and a third brother [i.e., Vayu and Agni, the younger brothers of Aditya, the sun], well fed with (oblations of) clarified butter. They yoke the seven (horses) to the one-wheeled car [i.e., the orb of the sun, or time, or a year]: one horse [i.e., the sun], named seven, bears it along: the three-axled wheel [i.e., the day with its three divisions, or the year with three seasons—hot, wet, and cold; or time—past, present, and future] is undecaying, never loosened, and in it all these regions of the universe abide. . . Who has seen the primeval (Being) at the time of his being born? What is that endowed with substance which the unsubstantial sustains? From earth are the breath and blood, but where is the soul? Who may repair to the soul to ask this? Immature (in understanding), undiscerning in mind, I inquire of those things which are hidden, (even) from the gods, (what are) the seven threads which the sages have spread to envelop the sun in whom all abide?" Another poet sings: "Then there was no entity or non-entity; no world, or sky, or aught above it; nothing anywhere in the happiness of any one, involving or involved; nor water deep or dangerous. Death was not, nor was there immor-

tality, nor distinction of day or night. But THAT breathed without afflation, single with her (*Swadha*) who is within him. Other than him, nothing existed (which) since (has) been. . . Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare, whence and why this creation took place? The gods are subsequent to the production of this world, then who can know whence it proceeded, or whence this varied world arose, or whether it uphold itself or not? He who in the highest heaven is the ruler of this universe, does indeed know; but not another one can possess this knowledge."

As soon as the problem implied by passages like these was raised in the minds of the Hindus, Hinduism must have ceased to be the pure worship of the elementary powers. Henceforward, therefore, we see it either struggling to reconcile the latter with the idea of one supreme being, or to emancipate the inquiry into the principle of creation from the elementary religion recorded in the oldest portion of Vedic poetry. The first of these efforts is principally shown in that portion of the Vedas called Brahmana, the second in the writings termed UPANISHAD. In the *Brahmana,*—a word of the neuter gender, and not to be confounded with the similar word in the masculine gender, denoting the first Hindu caste—the mystical allegories which now and then appear in what we have called the second class of Vedic hymns, are not only developed to a considerable extent, but gradually brought into a systematic form. Epithets given by the Rig-Veda poets to the elementary gods are spun out into legends, assuming the shape of historical narratives. The simple and primitive worship mentioned in the hymns becomes highly complex and artificial. A ponderous ritual, founded on those legends, and supported by a far more advanced condition of society, is brought into a regular system, which requires a special class of priests to be kept in a proper working order. Some of the Vedic hymns seem to belong already to the beginning of this period of the Brahmana worship, for in the second book of the Rig-Veda several such priests are enumerated

in reference to the adoration of Agni, the god of fire; but the full contingent of sixteen priests, such as is required for the celebration of a great sacrifice, does not make its appearance before the composition of the Brahmanas and later Vedas. Yet, however wild many of these legends are, however distant they become from the instinctive veneration of the elementary powers of nature, and however much this ritual betrays the gradual development of the institution of castes—unknown to the hymns of the Rig-Veda—there are still two features in them, which mark a progress of the religious mind of ancient India. While the poets of the Rig-Veda are chiefly concerned in glorifying the *visible* manifestations of the elementary gods—in the Brahmanas, their ethical qualities are put forward for imitation and praise. Truth and untruth, right and wrong—in the moral sense which these words imply—are not seldom emphasised in the description of the battles fought between gods and demons; and several rites themselves are described as symbolical representations of these and similar qualities of the good and evil beings, worshipped or abhorred. A second feature is the tendency, in these Brahmanas, of determining the *rank* of the gods, and, as a consequence, of giving prominence to one special god amongst the rest; whereas in the old Vedic poetry, though we may discover a predilection of the poets to bestow more praise, for instance, on Indra and Agni, than on other gods, yet we find no intention, on their part, to raise any of them to a supreme rank. Thus, in some Brahmanas, INDRA, the god of the firmament, is endowed with the dignity of a ruler of the gods; in others, the SUN receives the attributes of superiority. This is no real solution of the momentous problem hinted at in such Vedic hymns as we quoted before, but it is a semblance of it. There the poet asks "whence this varied world arose"—here the priest answers that "one god is more elevated than the rest;" and he is satisfied with regulating the detail of the Soma and animal sacrifice, according to the rank which he assigns to his deities.

A real answer to this great question is attempted, however, by the theologians who explained the "mysterious doctrine," held in the utmost reverence by all Hindus, and laid down in the writings known under the name of UPANISHADS. It must suffice here to state that the object of these important works is to explain, not only the process of creation, but the nature of a supreme being, and its relation to the human soul. In the Upanishads, Agni, Indra, Vayu, and the other deities of the Vedic hymns, become symbols to assist the mind in its attempt to understand the true nature of one absolute being, and the manner in which it manifests itself in its worldly form. The human soul itself is of the same nature as this supreme or great soul: its ultimate destination is that of becoming re-united with the supreme soul, and the means of attaining that end is not the performance of sacrificial rites, but the comprehension of its own self and of the great soul. The doctrine which at a later period became the foundation of the creed of the educated—the doctrine that the supreme soul, or (the neuter) Brahman, is the only reality, and that the world has a claim to notice only in so far as it emanated from this being, is already clearly laid down in these Upanishads, though the language in which it is expressed still adapts itself to the legendary and allegorical style which characterises the Brahmana portion of the Vedas. *The Upanishads became thus the basis of the enlightened faith of India.* They are not a system of philosophy, but they contain all the germs whence the three great systems of Hindu philosophy arose; and like the latter, while revealing the struggle of the Hindu mind to reach the comprehension of one supreme being, they advance sufficiently far to express their belief in such a being, but at the same time acknowledge the inability of the human mind to comprehend its essence.

The Epic period of Hinduism is marked by a similar development of the same two creeds, the general features of which we have now traced in the Vedic writings. The popular creed strives to find a centre round which to group

its imaginary gods, whereas the philosophical creed finds its expression in the groundworks of the SANKHYA, NYAYA, and VEDANTA systems of philosophy. In the former, we find two gods in particular who are rising to the highest rank, Vishnu and Siva; for as to Brahma (the masculine form of Brahman), though he was looked upon, now and then, as superior to both, he gradually disappears, and becomes merged into the philosophical Brahma (the neuter form of the same word), which is a further evolution of the great soul of the Upanishads. In the RAMAYANA, the superiority of Vishnu is admitted without dispute; in the great epos, the MAHABHARATA, however, which, unlike the former epos, is the product of successive ages, there is an apparent rivalry between the claims of Vishnu and Siva to occupy the highest rank in the pantheon; but Sanskrit philology will first have to unravel the chronological position of the various portions of this work, to lay bare its groundwork, and to show the gradual additions it received, before it will be able to determine the successive formation of the legends which are the basis of classical Hindu mythology. Yet so much seems to be clear already, that there is a predilection during this Epic period for the supremacy of Vishnu; and that the policy of incorporating rather than combating antagonistic creeds, led more to a quiet admission, than to a warm support of Siva's claims to the highest rank. We will point, however, to one remarkable myth, as it will illustrate the altered position of the gods during the Epic period. In the Vedic hymns, the immortality of the gods is never a matter of doubt; most of the elementary beings are invoked and described as everlasting, as liable neither to decay nor death. The offerings they receive may add to their comfort and strength; they may invigorate them, but it is nowhere stated that they are indispensable for their existence. It is, on the contrary, the pious sacrificer himself who, through his offerings, secures to himself long life, and, as it is sometimes hyperbolically called, immortality. And the same notion prevails throughout the oldest Brah-

manas. It is only in the latest work of this class, the *S'atapatha-Brahmana,* and more especially in the Epic poems, that we find the inferior gods as mortal in the beginning, and as becoming immortal through exterior agency. In the *S'atapatha-Brahmana,* the juice of the Soma plant, offered by the worshipper, or at another time clarified butter, or even animal sacrifices, impart to them this immortality. At the Epic period, Vishnu teaches them how to obtain the *Amrita,* or beverage of immortality, without which they would go to destruction; and this Epic *Amrita* itself is merely a compound, increased by imagination, of the various substances which in the Vedic writings are called or likened to *Amrita,* i.e., a "substance that frees from death." It is obvious, therefore, that gods like these could not strike root in the religious mind of the nation. We must look upon them more as the gods of poetry than of real life; nor do we find that they enjoyed any of the worship which was allotted to the two principal gods, Vishnu and Siva.

The philosophical creed of this period adds little to the fundamental notions contained in the Upanishads; but it frees itself from the legendary dross which still imparts to those works a deep tinge of mysticism. On the other hand, it conceives and develops the notion, that the union of the individual soul with the supreme spirit may be aided by penances, such as peculiar modes of breathing, particular postures, protracted fasting, and the like; in short, by those practices which are systematized by the Yoga doctrine. The most remarkable Epic work which inculcates this doctrine is the celebrated poem *Bhagavadgita,* which has been wrongly considered by European writers as a pure, Sankhya work, whereas S'ANKARA, the great Hindu theologian, who commented on it, and other Indian commentators after him, have proved that it is founded on the Yoga belief. The doctrine of the re-union of the individual soul with the supreme soul, was necessarily founded on the assumption, that the former must have become free from all guilt

affecting its purity before it can be re-merged into the source whence it proceeded: and since one human life is apparently too short for enabling the soul to attain its accomplishment, the Hindu mind concluded that the soul, after the death of its temporary owner, had to be born again, in order to complete the work it had left undone in its previous existence, and that it must submit to the same fate until its task is fulfilled. This is the doctrine of *metempsychosis,* which, in the absence of a belief in grace, is a logical consequence of a system which holds the human soul to be of the same nature as that of an absolute God. The beginning of this doctrine may be discovered in some of the oldest Upanishads, but its fantastic development belongs to the Epic time, where it pervades the legends, and affects the social life of the nation.

The Puranic period of Hinduism is the period of its decline, so far as the popular creed is concerned. Its pantheon is nominally the same as that of the Epic period. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva remain still at the head of its imaginary gods; but whereas the Epic time is generally characterised by a friendly harmony between the higher occupants of the divine spheres, the Puranic period shows discord and destruction of the original ideas whence the Epic gods arose. Brahma withdraws, in general, from the popular adoration, and leaves Vishnu and Siva to fight their battles in the minds of their worshippers for the highest rank. The elementary principle which originally inhered in these deities is thus completely lost sight of by the followers of the Puranas. The legends of the Epic poems relating to these gods become amplified and distorted, according to the sectarian tendencies of the masses; and the divine element which still distinguishes these gods in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, is now more and more mixed up with worldly concerns and intersected with historical events, disfigured in their turn to suit individual interests. Of the ideas implied by the Vedic rites, scarcely a trace is visible in the Puranas and Tan-

tras, which are the text-books of this creed. In short, the unbridled imagination which pervades these works is neither pleasing from a poetical, nor elevating from a philosophical point of view. Some Puranas, it is true—for instance, the *Bhagavata*—make in some sense an exception to this aberration of original Hinduism; but they are a compromise between the popular and the Vedanta creed, which henceforward remains the creed of the educated and intelligent. They do not affect the worship of the masses as practised by the various sects; and this worship itself, whether harmless, as with the worshippers of Vishnu, or offensive, as with the adorers of Siva and his wife Durga, is but an empty ceremonial, which, here and there, may remind one of the symbolical worship of the Vedic Hindu, but, as a whole, has no connection whatever with the Vedic scriptures, on which it affects to rest. It is this creed which, with further deteriorations, caused by the lapse of centuries, is still the main religion of the masses in India. The opinion these entertain, that it is countenanced by the ritual, as well as by the theological portion of the Vedas, is the redeeming feature of their belief; for, as nothing is easier than to disabuse their mind on this score, by reviving the study of their ancient and sacred language, and by enabling them to read again their oldest and most sacred books, it may be hoped that a proper education of the people in this respect, by learned and enlightened Indians, will remove many of the existing errors....

The philosophical creed of this period, and the creed which is still preserved by the educated classes, is that derived from the tenets of the Vedanta philosophy. It is based on the belief of one supreme being, which imagination and speculation endeavour to invest with all the perfections conceivable by the human mind, but the true nature of which is, nevertheless, declared to be beyond the reach of thought, and which, on this ground, is defined as not possessing any of the qualities by which the human mind is able to comprehend intellectual or material entity.

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